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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to offer new directions for equalizing the opportunities available for youth with disabilities to make a successful transition into adulthood. The first section following the introduction highlights research recommendations and public policies that should be considered as priorities for future development. The next section discusses the recommendations in the context of a review of research and concepts that help explain the interaction between disability and outcomes achieved by youth with special needs. The final section highlights specitic successful intervention strategies, including work experience programs, work skills preparation, employer-focused initiatives, rehabilitation engineering, use of occupational information, job-seeking skills preparation, transition planning, parental/family support interventions, and community-based collaborative intervention models. Following each strategy description, practices are suggested that should be initiated or continued to strengthen the current range of program models used. Two commentaries on this paper by Sharon Johnson and Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin are appended. (YLB)

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The Transition to Adulthood of Youth With Disabilities

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Youth and America's Future:
The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:
THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

When William Thomas Grant established the Grant Foundation in 1936, he sought a better understanding of the ways in which individuals adapt to the vicissitudes of life. Touched in his professional life by the importance of good human relationships, Mr. Grant wished to "help children develop what is in them" so they would better "enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them."

Fifty years later, recognizing the special needs of older adolescents in our changing society, the Foundation's Trustees established **Youth and America's Future** with much the same purpose; its charge is to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners and policymakers, and, thus, to help our nation chart a better future for youth.

The Foundation's President, Robert J. Haggerty, M.D., has described the Commission's unique perspective:

"Against a rising chorus of legitimate concern about the many problems facing today's youth, the Foundation has initiated this Commission on Youth and America's Future to speak in a different voice. It will explore the strengths of America's young men and women, their famlilies and the programs and community institutions that serve them. We adopt this approach not to diminish the importance of the problems that exist, but to learn the lessons of success. The Foundation is confident that this effort to look with renewed respect at youth, where it strides as well as where it stumbles, will help forge the links of understanding and mutual responsibility that make our democracy strong."

The publications in this series have been prepared to inform the Commission and to stimulate its thinking. While the Commission does not necessarily endorse the various findings presented, it does encourage their thoughtful consideration in the interests of American youth.

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THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin W. Martin

This paper was prepared for the Commission by **David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin W. Martin** of the Human Resource Center, the National Center on Employment and Disability.

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March 1988

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THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin W. Martin

Executive Summary

This paper examines the transition to adulthood of youth with disabilities. These youth must overcome not only the typical personal and social conflicts that occur during adolescence but also personal limitations and social stigma that handicap their development. The discrepancy between their achievements and those of their peers in educational and vocational pursuits is easily documented.

Although there are over four million youth with disabilities, it is only in the last two decades that public policy has seriously addressed the inequality of opportunity these youth experience.

This paper strongly recommends that policies continue to build and expand upon this premise that youth with disabilities have the right to an equal opportunity to be integrated into all sectors of social life. In general, it is recommended that policies be encouraged that help increase public awareness of the problems faced by youth both with and without disabilities as they make the transition from school to adulthood. It is recommended that crisis-oriented services be replaced with ones that anticipate needs.

The potential for redressing the disparity experienced by youth with special needs has been enhanced by a recent emphasis on programs and research which demonstrate the success of interventions based on these policy initiatives. These intervention strategies are emphasized in this paper. They cut across the fields of education, rehabilitation, and employment as well as transcending national and cultural boundaries. They include a variety of practices which focus on specific aspects of the transition experience as well as the integration and coordination of professionals and family who have typically functioned independently. Some of these strategies which are producing positive results for youth with disabilities include work experience programs, work-skills preparation

activities, employer-focused initiatives, rehabilitation engineering applications, guidance on how to make optimal use of occupational information, job-seeking skills preparation, transition planning, parental/family support interventions, and community-based collaborative intervention programs.

Much more remains to be done, however, particularly in the area of employment. If successful mainstreaming can be achieved in the world of work, then more complete integration in all social endeavors can be expected. The following issues highlight these areas as discussed in the paper and provide the framework for the proposed future directions for research and policy making. These issues are listed according to their major content area: general, education, employment, services, and family. This division is for organizational purposes only as most issues cross over several of the categories.

General Issues

- There is a need to clarify terminology so that we do not stigmatize people with disabilities by our language. This will also sharpen the definitions we use to identify people with disabilities so that we can prepare better programmatic responses to their needs.
- At least 27 million people between the ages of 15 and 64 have disabilities in the United States. Over 4 million youth with disabilities between the ages of 15-24 are in the transition years. Historically, people with disabilities have been disadvantaged in comparison to their peers - only one out of three now finds productive employment.
- In the last ten years, society has worked to integrate children with disabilities into the educational system. Almost four and one-half million children are now enrolled in the nation's special education programs. As they emerge into adulthood, these mainstreamed youth should expect to be fully integrated into the social fabric of our

culture, especially in the world of work.

- Although it appears that the same factors influence labor market entry and career development for youth with disabilities as for other youth, it is not clear what is needed to overcome the economic disadvantage experienced by these youth throughout adulthood. Comparative studies are needed to clarify whether developmental events and processes are similar and what special program supports, if any, are appropriate for youth with disabilities.
- Generalizing across persons with disabilities is inappropriate because interactions between the functional limitations of a person and his/her environment are unique. Education and rehabilitation and employment programs, therefore, require an individually-tailored approach.
- Negative attitudes and discrimination still prevail toward youth with disabilities, restricting their opportunity to maximize their potential as productive adults.

Education Issues

- Special educators, as well as regular educators, teach students to be good students, not to be functioning participants in society (e.g. in the home, to gain meaningful employment, and to participate in recreational and social activities). The emphasis needs to be changed.
- Many educators consider vocational education and career preparation to be outside the purview of special education. It is difficult, therefore, to coordinate integrated programs of academic and vocational training for adolescents with disabilities.
- Teachers, parents, doctors, etc. may not have consistent goals for a child with a disability. This results in fragmentation of services.
- Social development is often impeded for youth with disabilities because normal peer relationships are difficult to develop in special settings

or even in mainstreamed settings.

- Support for parents in coping with the educational difficulties of their children is not readily available or focused on their needs.
- The needs of youth with disabilities who are not considered handicapped by Committees on Special Education, and who are therefore ineligible for special services, are generally unmet.
- There is a lack of certified special education personnel. Regular education teachers also need to be trained by qualified special educators.
- It is unclear what the "best" balance may be between general and specific skills training in vocational programs for special needs students in order to maximize their employment and career potential.
- The appropriate balance between academic and vocational curriculum offerings for special needs students is unclear.

Employment Issues

- Community services often fail to provide meaningful employment training for youth with special needs. They frequently segregate individuals unnecessarily from peers without disabilities.
- Because of the current organization of the disability benefits system, many eligibility rules discourage recipients from taking a chance on employment training. Disincentives are sometimes strong.
- There is a lack of awareness on the state level on how to implement community-based supported employment. Few policies encourage it as a strategy for youth with disabilities to gain competitive employment.
- Both unemployment and underemployment are serious problems for youth exiting the educational system.
- Employers need to be made more comfortable about the concept of "reasonable accommodation" and how it applies to the initial hiring of

young employees with disabilities.

Service-Related Issues

- o There is a lack of adult services for young adults once they outgrow the mandates of the Education of the Handicapped Act. Adult services are typically not mainstreamed.
- o Fiscal reductions in individual public programs combine to have a drastic effect on young adults and children who need continual support. There are gaps in benefits and a lack of health insurance coverage.
- o There is a serious fragmentation of services (medical, vocational, social and others) as well as a lack of coordination among professionals, parents, and children themselves about desired goals and outcomes.

Family-related Issues

- o Families of youth with disabilities need financial help, peer support, and contact with other parents. Parents must be given or have access to resources enabling them to become their own case managers.
- o Individual Education Plans are not as individually-oriented as they could be.
- o Parents feel that many professionals have negative attitudes and are unaware of resources they could tap. They also feel that professionals are unwilling to use a team approach to help their children.
- o Parents need training and information prior to the transition years of their children.
- o Parents need opportunities for discussion and collaboration with professionals on three levels: individually, on behalf of their children, in the design of service programs, and at policy-making levels.

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

It comes as a surprise to many persons, even those most familiar with people who are economically disadvantaged and those who have been discriminated against, that persons with disabilities are the subgroup of our society which is most economically disadvantaged. A recent survey of persons with disabilities by Louis Harris and Associates (1986) found the prevalence of disability to be 15% of Americans between the ages of 16 and 65. A stunning 62% of persons with disabilities are unemployed. Only one person in 4 was found to work full-time, and 50% of people with disabilities earn less than the amount necessary to surpass the poverty level. Among nondisabled Americans, only 25% have household incomes at that level.[1]

The general education level of persons with disabilities is also significantly below that of the general population. Forty percent do not finish high school -- three times higher than for persons without disabilities. In addition, the Harris Survey indicated that Americans with disabilities participate much less often in social activities and community life.

What is it about growing up in the United States today that contributes to this reality that youth with disabilities must face as adults? More importantly, what programs and interventions are currently implemented during the transition years to provide these adolescents with opportunities that give them an equal chance to become active, productive citizens? Finally, what research, policy, and practice recommendations can be made that build upon current, promising efforts and which will continue to enhance these youths' potential?

This paper addresses these questions. Given the need described above, its purpose is to offer new directions for equalizing the opportunities available for youth with disabilities to make a successful transition into adulthood. It does this by first highlighting research recommendations and public policies that

should be considered as priorities for future development (Chapter II). These recommendations are based on a review of research and concepts which help explain the interaction between disability and outcomes achieved by youth with special needs (Chapter III). The paper then discusses specific successful intervention strategies and suggests practices that should be initiated or continued to strengthen the current range of program models utilized (Chapter IV).

In short, this paper reviews our national experience and makes recommendations for developing transition programs for youth with disabilities. It borrows pertinent information from the transitional literature about youth in general where applicable. The authors draw upon research of experts across the country and abroad, as well as their experience at the Human Resources Center (HRC) in Albertson, New York. HRC is a non-profit educational, vocational rehabilitation, research and employment center that has been a pioneer for more than thirty-five years in developing educational programs and job opportunities for people with disabilities.

B. Significance

People with disabilities are emerging from a period of "social invisibility", where they were out of sight and too often out of mind in state institutions far removed from everyday society. In 1967 the Congress passed the first Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), marking the beginning of a new period of awareness that persons with disabilities comprise a significant portion of the population and should be integrated into the social fabric of everyday life.

Since these modest origins in 1967, a truly historic commitment has steadily grown at the local, state and national levels to provide education for young people with disabilities. The most recent annual federal appropriation for education of children with disabilities is approximately $1.5 billion and for vocational rehabilitation of adults another $1.5 billion. Total local, state,

and federal special education and vocational rehabilitation expenditures are estimated at more than $13 billion. As significantly, the numbers of young people enrolled in special education programs has grown from an estimated 1.2 million in 1966 to 4.4 million children, approximately 11% of the school-age population.[2] School districts, which were once allowed to turn away the parents of school children with disabilities, are now responding in a fashion recognized as being the leading program in the world in terms of national policy commitment and scope of services.

Since 1978, when The Education For All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) became fully effective, each child with a disability has been entitled to a "free and appropriate public education" based on an individual education plan developed by school authorities with suggestions and approval from the child's parents. With millions of children now proceeding through and exiting from the public school systems, a national focus has developed on what prospects these young adults will have when the school years are over. How can they be absorbed into our society at large? How will they be able to participate in the work force? What kinds of support do, and will, they need? The recommendations discussed in this paper will help answer some of these questions.

C. Overview of Disabilities

1. Terms and Definitions

It is easy to think of people with disabilities as individuals who have something wrong which prevents them from doing an activity the rest of us do routinely. This perceived inability is what distinguishes people with disabilities within our society. The handicap of a person tends to stand out to an unreasonable degree. Whatever else the person can or cannot do is overlooked. This is so even though all of us cannot do everything equally well anyway. When a person has a disability it is perceived to generalize to all of his/her characteristics and attributes.

How we think about people with disabilities is influenced by the language we use to describe "disability". The media, especially the print media, frequently use the term "disabled person" rather than "person with a disability" as if the existence of an impairment affects the entire person. It is important to clearly define the concepts that describe what disability is so that misperceptions can be avoided. This paper will use the following terms and definitions.[3]

- o impairment - a permanent physiological, anatomical, or mental condition that can be objectively described primarily in medical terms;
- o functional limitations - occur when activities undertaken by a person are in some way affected by the existence of an impairment;
- o disability - exists when functional limitations are severe enough so that a person may not be able to perform a role, such as student or worker, in the same way as others typically perform that role;
- o handicap - a barrier, visible or invisible, that society places in the way of an individual with an impairment that prevents him/her from performing a particular task or activity.

If these terms and definitions are used precisely, it will become clear that the generic term "disabled" is improper and could lead to inappropriate perceptions and, eventually, to inappropriate policies and service programs. All of us have some degree of inability. Our social institutions must be prepared to accommodate those of us who have disabilities or will have them in the future. Setting aside special places and programs just for people with disabilities is based on an "us/them" mentality and should be an option of last resort. Also, we must constantly search for ways of eliminating the handicaps which society, intentionally or otherwise, has placed before people. Some of these barriers may be in our minds and result in attitudes that lead to unjust discrimination. We must also see that someone may have an impairment severe enough to create

functional limitations, such as an inability to walk, which may not result in any disability. For example, it should not be assumed automatically that someone in a wheelchair has a disability as a worker. Finally, although people may have similar impairments, there is no necessary relationship between what these are and what people can accomplish. Many factors can influence the extent to which a person performs, such as motivation, prior learning, opportunity structures, and whether or not someone has an impairment.

If we are conceptually accurate in the application of these terms, we will reduce or eliminate functional impairments and we will reduce and eliminate handicaps. Disability results from the interactions between the functional limitations of a person and the handicaps that exist in the person's environment. These interactions are unique. Changing them requires an individually tailored approach. Education and rehabilitation programs which are designed to help youth with disabilities make the transition from school to adulthood will be successful only if both functional limitations and handicaps are removed.

2. A Statistical Picture

Even using the preferred terminology "people with disabilities" can create the impression that people so labeled share many things in common. Although they experience community life and adult-age outcomes somewhat differently than people without disabilities, there is a great deal of variability among them. This results primarily from differences in types of impairments and the reactions individuals have to these impairments. Although service providers and educators know how real these differences are, and tailor services and instruction as best they can, research has not been able to quantify these distinctions, nor how many people are involved, or how to tailor approaches with much precision. Very little capability exists to even predict what outcomes are likely to result from the interaction of type of impairment and treatment intervention.

What do we know about people with disabilities, particularly youth? Although

surveys available to us shed some light on what these people experience, the data are not collected in the same way, nor are definitions of limitations or disability used consistently. Therefore, the information presented here reflects some of this inconsistency. We can only know in rather general terms how many people with disabilities there are. We know much less about the specifics of their lives.

In 1985, the Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census estimated that there were over 154 million people in the United States who were between the ages of 15 and 64. Of these, over 18% (27 million persons) were thought to have a functional limitation. In addition, six million were considered to have a severe limitation. Of the almost 40 million youth aged 15 to 24, over two million (5.2%) had a functional limitation. Another one million were classified as severe.[4]

At the time of the survey, several differences between people with and without disabilities were highlighted:

- 76% of people without disabilities were graduated from high school while only 55% with disabilities did so;
- 77% of people without disabilities were in the labor force compared to only 53% of those with limitations;
- Only 7.7% of people without disabilities lived by themselves as opposed to 11.5% of those with disabilities;
- Only 8.3% of people without disabilities earned less than $600 per month, as compared to 18.8% of people with disabilities. Conversely, over 34% of people without disabilities earned over $3000 per month while only 19% of people with disabilities did so.

This information points out that educational and employment outcomes are not only different for people with disabilities, but that their quality of life is likely to be poorer.

Education is a major factor in influencing what happens to us in adult life.

We have already noted that people with disabilities graduate from high school less frequently than others. What do we know about their school experiences that could account for this? Of the approximately two million children aged 6 to 17 in 1981 who had some degree of functional limitation, over 37% had difficulty attending regularly or had to attend a special school.[5] Only two percent of the over 41 million other students had these problems. In addition, 61% of students with limitations also experienced restrictions in non-school activities as opposed to less than three percent of their peers. Such youth also are judged by their teachers to have greater behavior problems, although this refers primarily to those experiencing emotional impairments.

The Education of the Handicapped Act defines the term "Handicapped Children" to mean "mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech or language impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired or children with specific learning disabilities who by reason thereof require special education and related services" (Sec. 602(a) (1), (20 U.S.C. 1401), P.L. 91-230, 1970, as amended). In total, over 4.3 million students received special education and related services in the 1985-86 school year under the Act, which was almost 11% of all students. Of these, 1.2 million (27%) were served in regular classes. An additional 42% were served in resource rooms, while nearly 24% were in separate classes within a regular education building. The remainder (7%) were educated in special schools and facilities.[6]

In the 1985-86 school year the largest group of students with special needs consisted of those with learning disabilities (nearly 43%). There were over 370,000 students (8.6%) who were identified as having emotional disturbances and almost 690,000 (15.7%) who had some degree of mental retardation who, when combined, accounted for approximately 25% of all students in educational programs for children with disabilities. Students with speech impairments, representing an additional 26% of students with special needs, comprised the third major

disability group. It is likely that these students, and many who have cognitive and emotional impairments are not typically included in the count of those who have functional impairments. The remaining groups of students had sensory or orthopedic impairments. To summarize, youth with disabilites are a large and diverse group. Their disabilities impact on the full range of school experiences available to them and, thus, differentiate them even more from their peers.

Recently, additional research has clarified more thoroughly the impact of disability on youth in schools. A report by Owings and Stocking (1985) revealed that high school sophomores and seniors who self-identified as handicapped perceive themselves as moving in and out of disability status when followed-up over time. It appeared that only about six percent of sophomores consistently believed they had a permanent impairment over a two-year time period. Over the course of attending high school, almost 28% of students reported experiencing a disability. At any point in time during these years, about 17% of students reported a disability.[7] These results suggest that many youth experience difficulties in large numbers and in ways that our educational programs do not always acknowledge. Also, it is not clear how the needs of these students differ from those with more permanent impairments.

It is important to note that even though the students in this study did not have severely restricting disabilities, their educational achievements lagged. Those who reported persistent limitations showed the least educational progress. On the average, their grades were lower and they scored lowest on cognitive testing. Fewer were in academic track programs and fewer went to college. They were also more likely to drop out of high school. Furthermore, the nature of this study led to an over sampling of youth with milder disabilities and results are likely to appear more favorable than if the full array of students with functional limitations were included. Similar findings are also reported in other studies.[8]

What happens to these youth after their high school years? One positive note is that even though fewer of them go on to college, the rate of attendance seems to be improving. Data from the College Freshmen Survey show that in 1985, 7.4% of all freshmen reported a disability. This was up from 2.6% in 1978 and only slightly below what would be expected given the prevalence of these youth in the population. While a change in willingness to report a disability might influence these numbers, federal laws have resulted in changes in admission practices and increased special services offered. Some differences that remained between students with and without disabilities were that freshmen with disabilities were older, felt less prepared, had lower high school class standings, possessed lower levels of self-confidence, and were more dependent on external funding sources.[9]

In several recent follow-up studies of high school graduates with disabilties a rather common pattern has appeared. The unemployment rate ranges from about 30% to 50%. Those with more severe impairments were more likely to be out of the labor force.[10] In some of the studies, many of those who did work were holding part-time jobs. Many of the respondents reported restricted life styles including limited access to transportation. Even for those working, their incomes lagged behind those without disabilities. Many reported finding jobs on their own with little or no assistance from schools or rehabilitation programs. These findings were supported by the national survey of households conducted by Louis Harris and Associates (1986). This survey found that 62% of respondents with disabilities were out of the labor force and a similar proportion felt they were denied access to various social activities such as visiting restaurants and attending cultural events.[11]

In conclusion, youth with disabilities are a large and diverse population. Many of them have special needs which our current array of educational and rehabilitation programs are not ameliorating. Letting these needs go unfulfilled during the transition years tends to have pervasive effects on the personal lives

of these youth as they grow older. There are serious implications for society as well because many of these youth need to avail themselves of public support systems for much of their adult lives. We do know that many of these youth can fulfill the same social expectations and roles as others if provided with the right opportunities. The next chapter highlights research recommendations and policy initiatives which will help to provide these opportunities.

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II. Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for 1) further research, and 2) changes in policy that would facilitate the transition of young people with disabilities age 16 -24 from school to adulthood. Both sets of recommendations are extracted from the review of the research literature in Chapter III. The recommendations for research denote areas where prior research is lacking or equivocal. Recommendations for policy are based primarily on existing research which provides a distinct direction or suggests new initiatives needed to fulfill expectations already set by prior policy.

A. Research Recommendations

- o Study how each of the following interact with psychological factors such as aspirations, interests, and work motivation to affect employment outcomes for youth with disabilities:
  - enriched home environment
  - access to labor market information
  - early work experience.
- o Determine if early access to labor market gatekeepers can enrich the work experiences of youth with disabilities. Investigate ways youth can be given greater exposure to these gatekeepers. Study if the relative size of a youth's personal network of contacts affects his/her employment outcomes.
- o Develop more studies which include direct comparisons of youth with and without disabilities to determine differences, if any, in needs, developmental patterns, and impact of interventions.
- o Determine the relative impact of factors such as the following in determining employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.
  - unjust and prejudicial discrimination,

- productive capacity of these youth,
- disincentives inherent in current public policies, and
- restricted experiences and social contacts of youth with disabilities.

o Determine how and to what extent significant others (e.g. parents, teachers, peers) of youth with disabilities can be effective models to maximize their social and community living skills, which in turn, will enhance their vocational functioning and ability to live independently as young adults. Also, compare how attitudes of teachers and peers in special education settings differ from those held by teachers and peers in mainstreamed settings. Determine if these differences, if any, influence educational and employment outcomes. Finally, explore how to best modify attitudes in educational settings so that more favorable expectations are held for youth with disabilities.

o Find out why some families can turn (what many would consider to be) a liability (a child with a disability) into an asset for both the individual and the family. What makes some families able to translate one into the other - how can other families learn? What parent training interventions best meet the needs of families which have youth in transition?

o What is the appropriate balance between educational, vocational, and social learning experiences for special needs students? How can school best provide this balance?

o Compare the effectiveness of traditional vocational education to community-based instruction for youth with disabilities.

o Research the extent to which real integration occurs in vocational education programs that are technically mainstreamed and its benefits for students with and without disabilities.

- What is the proper balance between academic preparation and vocational preparation for youth with disabilities? Are they given the same exposure to both of these curriculum components as other students?
- Study which employers are more likely to hire and upgrade young adults with disabilities. What are their characteristics? Which companies need training and information about this population? How can employers be recruited and how can their involvement be maintained over time?
- Look at ways to provide incentives to new employees and employers to try supported employment or competitive placement. Research different types of incentive packages for employers and how they affect placement outcomes for recently hired young adults with disabilities. Determine if more contact between youth in school and employers results in improved vocational outcomes.
- How can rehabilitation engineering applications be increased in employment and educational settings?
- What are the best ways to use occupational information for youth with disabilities? Can the same information systems be used for youth with disabilities as for other youth? What are the advantages/disadvantages of computerized systems?
- How can Individualized Education Plans and Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plans be used most effectively? How can they be coordinated?
- Document carefully the benefits of cooperative programs between education and rehabilitation as well as the feasibility for replicating programs in different georgraphical areas (e.g. urban vs. rural).
- Study the impact of supported employment at the individual, project and program levels. How can it be a viable option for youth with various physical as well as mental disabilities? What accommodations

are needed? How can employers be actively involved in supported employment?

B. Policy Recommendations

Results from existing research suggest that public policy affecting young adults with disabilities needs to reflect the generally accepted premise that people with disabilities have the right to be integrated into all sectors of social life. Educational policies already reflect this idea through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Schools alone, however, cannot fulfill the promise of this Act, nor can they be expected to take the lead in mainstreaming youth with disabilities in other social sectors such as employment, housing, transportation, recreation, etc. The effort also must cut across the domains of welfare, social services, mental health and health care, developmental disabilities, rehabilitation services, and others. Governmental policies on the federal, state, and local levels need to support, in a coordinated and cooperative way, the preparation of young adults with disabilities to be independent, productive members of our society - in short, to encourage them to be taxpayers, not tax liabilities.

The following specific policy recommendations are based on the existing body of research pertaining to youth with disabilities and their transition experiences. No one recommendation has priority over another:

General

- Assure youth with disabilities of widespread availability of recreational programs that are integrated with peers without disabilities.
- Support research and demonstration programs that help families and professionals to identify ways they can contribute mutually to positive outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Education

- o Make interaction and communication skills central curricular goals of regular and special education classrooms - these skills need to be generalizable to social and vocational situations, especially for young people with developmental delays.
- o State education agencies (SEAs) should work to promote interagency cooperative programs at local levels by:
  - establishing a coordinator position or unit to work with local school systems to plan transition programs;
  - encouraging the development of state and local education and business partnerships in conjunction with appropriate adult service providers;
  - providing resources to equip local programs with the capacity to focus on the different needs of female and minority students with disabilities;
- o Coordinate community-based learning environments at local levels; the collaboration between educational, vocational, rehabilitation and social programs needs to be supported actively by federal and state policies; these collaborative programs need incentives to involve families, employers and other local resources in transition programs. To accomplish this direction the following steps should be taken:
  - adopt policies that create a wider range of acceptable options for families and which realize the variety of needs and desires among families;
  - encourage more individualized transition planning by high schools, developmental disabilities/mental retardation agencies, and vocational rehabilitation agencies;
  - implement state-level systems that can track information relevant

to service planning (e.g. number of students graduating with the need for community support);

- plan services that minimize competition between graduates of public schools, individuals currently on waiting lists for community services and those leaving institutions;
- provide more local program funding, rather than funding of large, regionally-based institutions;
- provide services to employers who hire young workers with disabilities so that they qualify for all incentivies available to them, such as tax credits, and receive other resources to make their involvement a significant business venture as well as one of goodwill.

Employment

o Implement policies that support the ability of young adults with disabilities to both seek and maintain competitive employment in order to be independent. These could include provisions for safe, reliable, and affordable transportation; incentives to business to provide needed job opportunities and training programs; availability of accessible, affordable housing; and policies which encourage labor force participation while receiving necessary medical, financial, and other public support.

o Establish direct training and recruiting programs involving schools, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and employers so that employers can meet more qualified young job applicants who have disabilities; also, employers should become involved earlier in the transition process so that when training is needed, youth and employer-based training sites are prepared more adequately.

o Support more programs that teach job-seeking skills (JSS) to youth

with disabilities.

- Assure continual access to reasonable accommodations for young adults with disabilities; establish ways that costs of accommodations can be shared by workers, employers, and society.
- Make occupational information available to youth with disabilities and their families so that adequate transition planning can occur; typical information should be supplemented with suggestions about availability of aids and devices, transportation and enhanced opportunities through rehabilitation engineering; technological applications will be crucial to on-going career development of these youth.

III. Youth With Disabilities in Transition: Research Highlights

The information in this section provides the basis for the research and policy recommendations suggested in the previous chapter. Most of what we know about the transition from school to work for youth with disabilities is dependent on research of youth in general. A few comparative studies, however, are available to give us additional insight into these transition years as they are affected by the presence of disability. This overview of the literature, therefore, will first present highlights from the most recent general body of research, and finish with some of the findings specific to youths with disabilities including documentation of the need for services.

A. Research On The Transition Years Of Youth in General

Educational research has generally found that the more education and specific skill training one has attained, particularly in terms of receiving a credential such as a high school diploma or skill certificate, the more likely one will gain favorable work-related outcomes.[1] Early research, however, found that vocational education did not seem very important in contributing to employment, while more recent studies using more precise measures show that such schooling can have the potential for making a positive impact.[2] Similarly, earlier research also suggested that work experience during the school years can positively affect post-school employment,[3] which later studies have found to be not necessarily true.[4]

Psychologically-based research on the influence of personal characteristics indicates that factors such as aspirations, interests, and work motivation, tend to be interactive with other human capital factors and may not have a direct effect on employment. Intelligence, however, seems to be one intrinsic or innate personal factor, along with ethnic background, that has a consistent and direct relationship with employment outcomes.[5] Thus, programs that emphasize the development of the self-concept, however that might be defined, may be focusing

on secondary factors. Enriched home environments, access to labor market information, and early work experience success seem to moderate many of these psychological factors and deserve direct attention.

Sociological factors are perhaps an earlier link in the causal chain affecting labor market outcomes. A father's occupational status is related to the eventual occupational status of off-spring.[6] Socioeconomic status also interacts with other variables in influencing employment outcomes. For example, family income influences access to role models, labor market information and educational opportunities. Enriched environments also instill in youth greater aspirations which tend to remain constant and influential over a long period of time.[7]

Socioeconomic factors often are weakened if labor market opportunites do not materialize. This may occur due to a slack labor market and poor economic conditions. In other words, youth with many positive attributes may not find ready access to labor markets of choice. This often results in retarded career development in subsequent years.[8]

Generally, economically-derived inquiries indicate that communicating an image of a productive worker is important in how a person obtains a job and eventually achieves as a worker. A related but somewhat different body of research using a sociological basis suggests that a complementary framework exists which not only adds to the economic/psychological models, but may explain how external factors and socioeconomic background come into play. Granovetter (1974, 1981) has proposed that many of these factors operate through opportunity structures rather than directly on labor market outcomes.[9] For example, youth with greater amounts of education and from enriched socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have access to key gatekeepers in the labor market. These contacts will be as influential as, or perhaps more influential than human capital factors.[10] Personal networks in combination with human capital factors influence how the careers of youth begin and develop.

The upshot of these research models is that what one knows and who one knows influences career development.[11] Transition programs need to help students become productive, but they also need to open up labor market channels to help youth gain an early and successful entry into employment.

B. Research On The Transition Years of Youth With Disabilities

1. Labor Market Studies

Only recently have we had access to research that looks at youth with disabilities as a sub-population of youth in general. This gives an important advantage in that we can pinpoint differences and similarities much better than if we studied populations separately. More research like this will enable programs to accommodate those with disabilities based on documented need and to mainstream them where accommodations are not needed.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (NLS) is the source of this unique opportunity (Borus, 1982), and several studies of youth with disabilities from this national sample have been completed.[12] One caution regarding these studies is that the definition of disability used is based on self-report of any condition that prevented work in a previous time period. Thus, temporarily-limiting injuries and illnesses could be included along with the more traditional understanding of disability used in education and rehabilitation.

One positive note is that, in general, the same human capital factors operate for those with and without disabilities. Education, early work experience, enriched environments, etc. all relate to employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. One study of the impact of vocational education found that such schooling was useful for youth regardless of disability. A negative finding from research based on the NLS is that labor market achievement for those with disabilities is considerably less than for those without disabilities.[13] Unemployment was found to be higher[14] and pay less.[15] Several explanations may account for this, as follows:

- o Employers may discriminate unjustly and discount the value of human capability due to existence of a disability;
- o Youth with disabilities actually may be less productive and need an increased amount of enrichment to catch up to youth without disabilities;
- o Benefits contingent upon continual demonstration of work-limiting disabilities such as Supplemental Security Income may make labor force participation too costly for youth with disabilities;[16]
- o In spite of improving their abilities, youth with disabilities may be restricted in other ways. Their medical requirements may limit the time they can give to school and work[17] and their access to transportation is limited;[18] and,
- o Due to these various restrictions, the social network of youth may be limited, thus minimizing their contact with employment gatekeepers and reducing their access to career-relevant information. If so, schools can begin overcoming this deficit by developing channels to employers for these youth while they are still in school.

2. Sociological Influences

How young adults with a disability and others around them react to the disability influences how these youth relate to society. Their degree of interest in and capacity to become integrated as adults are shaped in large part by cultural values as well as interpersonal interactions experienced as a result of their social upbringing. This section will explore some of these influences.

Attitudes. Most societies, including that of the United States, view disability, particularly physical ones, in a negative context: it is "deviant" or "unwanted"; repulsive; something to be feared. People with disabilities are typically viewed as different: characteristics such as dependency, sadness, isolation and emotional instability are often attached to them.[19] These views

markedly influence the nature of the interactions experienced between youth with disabilities and those with whom they come into contact. Most significantly, others play a major role in these youths' chances for social integration in that misperceptions can limit their range of possible activities and behaviors.
Adolescence is a difficult enough stage without having to overcome stereotypes which reduce the individuality of the person and produce a narrow range of role expectations.

Attitudes are important to individuals with severe physical disabilities on three levels: 1) personal relationships; 2) relationships with professionals and sevice providers; and 3) relationship to the general public.[20] On the personal level, attitudes of others can significantly affect the frequency and quality of interactions and contribute to the shaping of the individual self-concept. For instance, friends and relatives may avoid or even abandon someone who becomes physically altered due to an accident or who may undergo personality or psychological changes caused by the progress of a disease. A general loss of social contact can occur.[21]

The nature of individual social contacts can also be influenced by a disability and whether or not it is visible. In the case of invisible disabilities, the interacting partner presumes all is as it appears. Research suggests that when a disability is disclosed, ambiguity anxiety and confusion occur for the young person with the disability as well as for those with whom he/she interacts. For visible disabilities, the presumption is often one of incompetence or lack of ability. The presence of these pre-conceived ideas create anxiety and uncertainty, and the need for the young person to prove he/she is capable.[22]

Relationships with professionals and service providers are important because they can influence the young adult's life directions. Their attitudes and expectations, as well as ability to funnel information and necessary services to

the young adult and family members, make them "gatekeepers" in many ways to job possibilities and lifestyle choices in adulthood.

The prevailing attitudes of the general public and society at large also are influential in the everyday life experiences of individuals with disabilities. National, state, and local policies affect the extent of public support available for youth with disabilities by creating eligibility standards for services and channeling access to programs and facilities.

Some Specific Attitudes. In all stages of development, and especially in young adulthood, a person's self-image is believed to be influenced by the attitudes and opinions of others. For students with disabilities, attitudes have been typically shaped by family, peers with disabilities and school personnel in special settings. But with mainstreaming, the attitudes of others such as regular education teachers and peers without disabilities have become more influential. Research shows that students with disabilities in mainstreamed settings are often rejected by their non-disabled peers to varying degrees, and may be assigned a lower social status position in the classroom.[23] Other characteristics, however, such as achievement level, gender, attractiveness, race, socioeconomic status, and classroom conduct can intervene to alter these attitudes. Such attitudes are important to the student with a disability because he/she may internalize them and believe him/herself to be inferior. This situation can affect school achievement, psychological adjustment and interpersonal competence.

Research also shows that teachers generally tend to have negative attitudes -- the more severe the disability, the more negative the attitude. This has been found both before and after the 1975 legislation mandating mainstreaming. Many students with disabilities, therefore, are subjected to negative school experiences unless attitudes of peers and professionals are changed. Simply putting students with disabilities into regular classrooms is not believed to result in more positive attitudes. The implementation of effective attitude

modification procedures is thought to be necessary.[24] At the same time, other research is unclear as to the specific or combination of student characteristics that influence teachers' attitudes. Again, a student's level of achievement, gender, degree of attractiveness, age, race, and other characteristics can all influence teachers' attitudes toward students - both with and without disabilities.

Attitudes toward physical appearance. The general tone of rehabilitation literature on physical attractiveness focuses on the goal of making a person merely clean and presentable, not attractive.[25] Such expectations by professionals and others with whom youth with disabilities have contact are believed to become internalized by the youth themselves. These attitudes are changing, however. Those who help to counsel and prepare youth and adults for careers are starting to encourage the importance of "dressing for success" for job interviews and to be more integrated into all aspects of social life. With the high value our society places on physical appearance, young adults with visible disabilities, therefore, have typically started out with a disadvantage which has been perpetuated by the expectations of significant others who shape their self-images and resulting future interactions.

Social Class Influences. Studies consistently find that people judged to be in lower socio-economic levels have higher disability rates.[26] Explanations for this, however, are varied and inconclusive. They include poor housing, crowding, racial factors, low income, poor education, and unemployment - all of which are believed to result in poor nutrition, poor medical care, strenuous employment conditions in non-hygenic settings, and increased exposure to noxious agents. Some sociologists, however, contend that these explanations are inadequate to explain the very large numbers of diseases associated with lower socio-economic levels. The relationship may, instead, stem from differences in the way people cope with stress and problems in their everyday lives. For example, smoking and

obesity are known to be related to higher rates of many diseases, and smoking and obesity are more common in the lower classes.[27]

Having a child or young adult with a disability has its effects on family members who tend to react in different ways depending on several factors such as social class standing. For instance, mothers from families in lower socio-economic levels tend more often to exhibit depression and psychological distress when there is a child with a disability in the family.[28] Mothers from low income, black, two parent families also drop out of the workforce more often when there is a child with a disability while mothers from high income, white, two-parent families leave the workforce less often.[29] It is thought that this trend may be due to greater access to public-supported medical care for a child with a disability and lower-class mothers leave the workforce to qualify. Parents from higher socio-economic levels also have greater difficulty accepting a child with a disability, perhaps due to higher expectations. Yet they become more involved in their children's educational programs than parents with lower incomes and education levels.[30] Research is unclear about how such actions and reactions directly affect a young person with a disability, but studies do suggest that positive outlooks and attitudes seem to result in better-adjusted children and, eventually, young adults.

The Family as a Social Influence. Parents and families exert direct influence on all youth. For young adults with disabilities, however, parents could conceivably play any or all of the following roles - besides that of merely being a "parent" of a teenager: teacher, advocate, service coordinator, information coordinator, member of special parent group, or organization.

Parents and family are the only "constant" in the lives of youth with severe disabilities. These youth often receive fragmented services from agencies resulting in uncoordinated efforts to meet their specific educational, social, vocational, and other needs. Parents, then, become the only ones who could be the

ultimate advocates and case managers for their teenage children with disabilities, whether or not they desire that role or are prepared for it.[31]

Through effective training single or two-parent families can become the "glue" to help reduce system fragmentation and make interagency collaboration work to provide needed services for youth as they reach and experience young adulthood.[32] However, many parents either do not want such training, do not know where to go for it, or do not have the time for it. Even this source of cohesiveness may be weakened or lost because a child with a disability is twice as likely as an able-bodied child to grow up in a home where the parents are divorced or separated.[33]

Family and parental expectations have been found to be predictive of both work and social behavior for individuals with mental disabilities.[34] Their values and attitudes influence how their children will view work as an adulthood goal and can make an initial job placement in competitive employment either a success or a complete failure.[35]

Parental involvement, even as early as elementary school, is believed to be one of the greatest resources in developing a child's employment potential and in preparing them for the transition years. Activities which build independence, provide opportunities to get involved in the community, promote appropriate personal behavior and grooming, and require increasing amounts of responsibility all help to instill a positive and optimistic self-image as well as provide a base for preferred work behaviors expected of an adult.[36] Once a child has reached adolescence, parents and family may then be a major factor in actually accessing the informal employment network in many communities.[37]

Research has isolated many factors that influence parental attitudes toward their children with disabilities. For example, parents are more accepting of a child born with a disability than of an older child who suddenly is diagnosed or experiences a disability. Parents react to disabilities differently - a child

with a disability considered less severe is not necessarily more accepted. The "social acceptability" of the disability is also a variable. The sex of the child influences parental attitudes and is, for instance, linked to the family's socio-economic status. Parents who are classified in lower socioeconomic groups more often have negative attitudes towards a male child with a disability. As a final example, the family's religious views can affect their attitudes, and thus behaviors, towards a child with a disability. Mothers who are Protestant have been found to be less anxious about their children with cerebral palsy than mothers who are Catholic or Jewish; while mothers who are Catholic are more accepting of their children with mental retardation.[38]

Interactions between these variables (and no doubtedly others) complicate the ability to predict the influences these have on youth as they mature into adults. It is, therefore, difficult for educators and service providers to know how best to interact with parents to benefit the young adult.

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IV. Intervention Strategies

Recently, much attention has been given to transition interventions and practices that are believed to have a positive impact on the transition experiences of youth with disabilities. Although attempts have been made to classify these interventions according to certain similarities,[1] Halpern[2] pointed out that some organizational schemes were too narrowly focused on employment and did not address other important transition outcomes such as community integration and social interdependence. These schemes have also reflected primarily an educational emphasis although some rehabilitation interventions were included.

We would like to suggest a more complete classification system that incorporates a variety of educational and rehabilitation techniques that have shown promise for youth with disabilities. Indeed, research has found that the common elements of successful transition programs that transcend national and cultural boundaries include a mutually-rewarding combination of resources from government, employers, social service programs (e.g. schools, training and rehabilitation programs) and youth themselves, including their families.[3] The intervention strategies discussed in this literature review, therefore, will include those based in a range of settings. Strategies covered include:

- work experience programs;
- work skills preparation;
- employer-focused initiatives;
- rehabilitation engineering applications;
- use of occupational information;
- job-seeking skills preparation;
- transition planning;
- parental/family support interventions; and
- community-based collaborative intervention models.

Each intervention strategy is followed by a list of program practice recommendations which should be initiated, continued, or expanded to maximize the effectiveness of these program efforts to prepare youth with disabilities to be independent adults. Private program practices, especially by employers, need to be synchronized with the public policy trends currently in development; i.e., they need to revolve around the general concept of providing equal employment and advancement opportunities to youth with and without disabilities. Research results imply that such practices are a sound business investment.

A. Work Experience Programs

The relationship between work experience during high school for students both with and without disabilities, and future employment outcomes, is unclear. One study indicated that if high school youth,in general, acquire work experience before leaving school, they tend to have fewer and shorter periods of unemployment and also greater hourly wage rates than non-experienced counterparts.[4] A more recent study, however, found no relationship between in-school work experience and wages one year after graduation. This same study also found that those who worked in school had less unemployment after graduation but only if they stayed with the same employer.[5] Studies of young adults with disabilities have also found conflicting results. Some[6] found the two to be related, while others have not.[7] Intervening factors such as type of disability, severity of disability or type of work experience could very well have an influence on employment outcomes.

Employers hire people who they feel will bring productivity to their firms. Prior experience, education, and training are signals of productivity potential.[8] For youth, especially those just leaving school, these signals are not very strong. It is easy for employers to reject youth for older workers who can provide evidence of their achievements. For youth who will not seek post-secondary education, work experience obtained during the school years can be

an important asset. However, it should not be emphasized at the expense of academic and social pursuits. A proper balance between all three activities needs to be found.

Several interventions are available to accomplish suitable work experiences for youth with disabilities while in school. The most familiar, perhaps, is the cooperative work program where special education students work at community jobs for school credit. Halpern[9] documented the employment benefits for youth with mental retardation who participated in these programs. Bensberg and Ashby[10] reported a study of exemplary cooperative programs. Features that seemed to mark model programs included competency building in social as well as vocational areas and strong involvement of community employers during all phases of program planning and implementation.

Another work experience opportunity is the sheltered workshop. The workshop environment typically is not integrated and, thus, not viewed favorably from a mainstreaming perspective.[11] A report of European practices,[12] however, indicated that a planned use of sheltered facilities can pave the way to competitive employment for youth with disabilities. Also, programming at workshops is becoming more creative in response to the needs of youth. Melberg[13] described a sheltered workshop program for severely retarded youth which integrated workers without disabilities and applied the same policies and benefits to all workers regardless of disability status. Although this program was not designed to accomplish transition to competitive work, the wages of the retarded youth exceeded the average found in other sheltered settings. These findings suggest sheltered environments can be an adjunct to work experience programs for students who may need the resources of a special environment for a longer period of time. Supported employment programs provide a similar alternative (see the discussion of supported employment under "Community-Based Collaborative Intervention Models").

An issue often raised regarding work experience for high school youth concerns the amount of time at work and the types of job obtained. Raelin[14] reviewed the literature which suggested that part-time workers did not receive the same training and socialization experiences as full-time workers. It was hypothesized that employers do not want to invest in part-timers to the extent that they do for full-time workers. However, attending school and working full-time obviously has its immediate disadvantages, particularly in terms of a restricted social life. This would be particularly negative for youth with disabilities who may already have restricted social experiences. However, Raelin's subsequent study found that part-time work was equal to full-time work in relationship to eventual work-force achievement factors. Steinberg, Greenberger, Vaux, & Ruggiero[15] studied the issue of quality of job to examine whether or not the typical low-status part-time jobs available to youth actually damage their motivation to work. They found that regardless of quality of job held by those in the sample, they remained positive about their eventual careers. Their aspirations were not adversely affected.

Recommended Practices

- Continue work experience programs that are built on close cooperation between schools and local employers;
- Make the development of social, as well as vocational, skills equally important goals for work experience programs;
- Make a range of work experience opportunities available to youth with disabilities who, depending on the disability, may need different levels and types of support and supervision to help them become independent workers;
- Emphasize a balance between academic studies, social pursuits and work experience during the transition years.

B. Work Skills Preparation

The distinction between work skills preparation and work experience programs is primarily definitional. In reality, work experience programs also include some direct attention to skill building. However, it is useful to discuss work skills preparation separately to emphasize certain training issues.

Work skills can be described as general or specific. General skills are those that can be used by many employers while specific skills may be limited to only one.[16] Traditionally, school-based programs are more general than specific. Even in vocational education programs, such as auto mechanic training, many potential employers exist. Research suggests that vocational education can improve eventual employment outcomes of graduates under certain conditions.[17] Many of the more recent approaches to training special needs students recommend community-based training at an employer's site.[18] This has become known as the supported employment model. Although some general skills will probably be acquired, the bulk of what is learned will be specific to that one employer. Thus, the student may not learn enough generalizable skills to compete in the broader labor market, but may become a much more valued employee by that one employer.

Recent surveys of employers regarding their expectations of youthful entrants into the labor market indicated their preferences for those that have a good, general orientation to work.[19] Employers also prefer to hire on the basis of what they perceive as socialization skills, perhaps in preference to occupational skills. Work skills programs for special needs students, therefore, must not lose sight of the need for basic instruction in these essential general social skills. The proper balance, however, between general and specific skill training in vocational programs for special needs students is unclear.

Another issue related to training revolves around mainstreaming. For the last decade, special needs students increasingly have received instruction in

integrated learning environments. Madden & Slavin[20] have fastidiously reviewed the literature documenting the general educational gains that can occur under mainstreamed conditions. One well-designed study indicated that cooperative instructional techniques requiring close collaboration between handicapped and non-handicapped youth increased positive interpersonal contact between both groups of students.[21] Given the desirability of good interpersonal skills in work settings, outcomes of integrated instruction suggest that mainstreamed youth might be better able to succeed in the work force. Yet, many do not feel that special needs students are generally integrated into most school vocational programs.[22] Research needs to address the extent to which integration occurs in vocational education programs, the problems and costs of implementation, and derived benefits.

A final issue concerns the general direction of the special education curriculum which is placing increasingly greater emphasis on vocational preparation. As this focus increases, the attention to academic preparation could wane. In contrast, the regular curriculum is re-emphasizing academic skills. Special needs students may not get the same exposure to basic academic preparation. Will this create another inequality between those in regular and those in special programs? Research needs to explore what is the appropriate balance between academic and vocational curriculum offerings for special needs students.

Recommended Practices

- Emphasize the development of general socialization skills that can be applied across employers and employment settings;
- Conduct work-skills preparation and training programs in integrated settings where youth with and without disabilities interact and cooperate;
- Provide a balance between academic preparation and vocational training

for each student with special needs which meets his/her individual needs and aspirations.

- Provide students with training that meets the requirements of new, higher-skilled entry-level jobs of industry.

C. Employer-Focused Initiatives

A desired outcome of transition programs is employment of youth in jobs that have career potential. To reach this goal, schools and rehabilitation programs have traditionally prepared youth, but in the end, it is employers who hire them. Therefore, involving employers in the preparation process has become a frequent strategy of education and rehabilitation programs.[23] Employer participation is thought to yield several important benefits to transition programs. For one, employers can relate changes in the work place to needed revisions in vocational education curricula and help instructors stay up-to-date. Thus, employers are typically involved to exchange information with teaching and rehabilitation professionals. Little contact occurs directly between employers and youth, except when students obtain work experience and/or training in community-based sites.

In the last decade rehabilitation programs have pioneered new ways of involving employers more actively in the preparation process.[24] The Projects With Industry initiative of the Rehabilitation Services Administration has spearheaded this effort at partnerships.[25] As a result, employers have become involved in much more than curriculum development. They have purchased or donated training equipment, prepared more community-based training slots, participated in teaching youth how to look for work, and have helped place youth in actual jobs.[26]

It is apparent that employers can bring added resources to the transition effort. These partnership efforts, however, have not occurred without raising questions. By working too closely with local employers, it has been suggested that transition programs may merely be funneling students to curriculum areas

that limit their employment opportunities only to local labor markets.[27] Such narrowing does not appear to be congruent with the broader career development intentions of transition programs. Employers, themselves, have raised other questions. Transition programs that use federal dollars often require cumbersome record-keeping and reporting which serves as a disincentive to employers.[28] Also, evaluations of programs funded by the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) suggest that successful program results require careful structuring and the expertise of program-based specialists.[29] Adding these personnel, of course, adds greatly to program expense.

Since passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, persons with disabilities have been included in affirmative action employment regulations. As a result, employers have been required to apply "reasonable accommodation" to assure that qualified persons with disabilities are hired. Although a precise definition of reasonable accommodation has not been developed, evidence has accumulated that suggests a variety of accommodations are typically accomplished. Some of these are relatively simple, one-time efforts that cost very little while others require permanent changes and bear greater costs. Employers seem to be receptive to these accommodations, but most are implemented for employees already on the payroll who have acquired a disability.[30]

Accommodations are usually in the form of job restructuring, job modifications, or site modifications. Job restructuring results in re-arranging or re-assigning job functions among employees so that a task that cannot be performed by a person with a disability is done by another worker. The worker with a disability may perform an alternative function. Job modification results when the duties or performance requirements of a job are changed. For example, a task requiring an individual to push or pull levers might be changed to one where only buttons need to be pushed. Site modification refers to environmental changes that alter the building and/or grounds of an establishment to make it accessible

to people with disabilities. Designating special parking sites, lowering of drinking fountains, re-modeling of bathrooms, and installing ramps are examples of site modifications. Use of visual or auditory amplification devices are modications that assist workers with hearing or sight problems.

Currently, state rehabilitation agencies can bear costs associated with reasonable accommodations, and tax credits are available to employers who modify their environments. However, several questions arise when these practices are brought to bear on youth in transition. Even if public funds are available to facilitate an initial placement, they are generally not available to support modifications that may be needed for career advancement. Research needs to explore how to bring resources together so that employers apply reasonable accommodations to proven workers as well as untried youth. We also need to know what the long-term cost requirements are so that more equitable allocations of these costs can be made among employers, workers with disabilities, and society in general.

Although employer initiatives in transition programs have been underway for many years, there is a need for a number of empirical studies. Little is known about the best way to recruit employers or how to maintain their involvement over time. We do not know if having employers actively involved with youth while still in school will lead to enhanced employment outcomes. Out of all possible employer activities, we also do not know which ones are the most valuable or conversely, the most costly. If we understood the value of the costs and benefits associated with these employer involvement activities, we could make more informed program policy decisions. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine what career outcomes occur for graduates of transition programs that actively involve employers. It is important to know how career opportunities evolve as a result.

<u>Recommended Practices</u>

- Actively involve employers in the transition process for youth with

disabilities through their input in the planning and development of education and rehabilitation programs that meet their needs;

- o Develop activities which include contacts between youth with disabilities and employer presentatives with the intention of developing employer networks for locating work opportunities for these youths;
- o Continue to provide employers with information about the concept of reasonable accommodation and its specific applications to hiring youth with disabilities;
- o Encourage employers to conduct a review of current recruitment strategies to determine if all possible sources of qualified entry-level workers with disabilities are being accessed (e.g. disabled student programs at high schools or colleges; rehabilitation programs; computerized job-matching systems);
- o Ensure the equal availability of training and development opportunities for youth with disabilities. This might be accomplished by:
  - encouraging supervisors to consider workers with disabilities,
  - ensuring the accessibility of training programs and training sites,
  - equipping supervisors with knowledge about how to provide reasonable accommodation;
- o Encourage employers to use external expert resources for assistance in providing reasonable accommodations and for:
  - up-to-date information about technical applications; and
  - specialized, individualized adaptations including design and fabrication;
- o Mainstream human resource programs, such as Employee Assistance Programs, so they are prepared to assist workers with disabilities;

- o Encourage employers to include items relevant to workers with disabilities on general employee survey questionnaires.

D. Rehabilitation Engineering Applications

Rehabilitation engineering is an exciting field that is rapidly being recognized as an important resource in the education and employment of youth with disabilities. For many years, aids and devices from one branch of technology or another have been used to enable a person with a disability to perform a task or function previously not possible. Computer applications can now free the intelligence of people with disabilities to perform important information and decision tasks they were not capable of doing before because of physical limitations. One demonstration project succeeded in placing 79 of 116 persons previously considered too physically limited to pursue any types of employment.[31]

Research needs to explore the great potential of rehabilitation engineering for youth in transition. Although special rehabilitation engineering centers are supported by the federal government to develop new aids and devices, education and rehabilitation professionals have little knowledge about how to use this resource. Many aids and devices are commercially available, but information about them is not easily available. How to help professionals become aware of these resources and how they should be used, especially since there is a shortage of rehabilitation engineers, is a problem that needs to be studied. Although most of the applications have been made in employment settings, it is probable that schools could make use of engineering applications to improve the learning process for youth with disabilities.[32]

Recommended Practices

- o Provide rehabilitation engineering applications for youth with disabilities in academic and vocational education settings;
- o Equip school personnel with access to rehabilitation engineering and information about aids and devices.

E. Use of Occupational Information

There is some evidence, based on descriptive research, that information is an important commodity in the labor market success of job applicants. Parnes and Kohen[33] found that youth with superior occupational information were more successful in obtaining better paying and higher status jobs after two years than youth with less adequate information. Zadny and James[34] discovered that rehabilitation counselors with greater frequencies of contact with employers and more access to systematically-managed occupational information tended to achieve greater placement rates. In general, counselors with more awareness of the world-of-work had more success in placing their clients in employment. Wanous[35] found evidence suggesting that workers maintain more positive attitudes and leave their jobs less often when, during the hiring stage, their employers informed them realistically about the positive and negative aspects of the companies they were coming to work for. From several perspectives, then, both quantity and quality of information help youth make appropriate decisions during their transition years.

Recent developments have made occupational information much more accessible to students and professionals alike. The increased applications of computer technology in facilitating information management has resulted in more and larger database collections of occupational information and delivery systems. These open up vast amounts of information to virtually anyone. The problem has changed quickly from having too little information that was difficult to access to one of information overload that ends in the same result - decisions being made without appropriate information.

Research is needed in the following areas to clarify some important issues about using occupational information in transition programs for youth with disabilities:

- What information is pertinent to decision-making? What are the best

formats for presenting information? How is information acquired?

- o The balance needed between personal and impersonal sources of information is not clear. Computerized databases certainly offer information quickly and comprehensively, but how much personal observation at actual worksites is still valuable?
- o Since parents and professionals are involved in a young person's decision-making, how is information best exchanged to result in shared decisions that promote the growing independence of young persons, as well?
- o Given the sudden emergence of many computerized systems, some offered commercially, how do professionals decide which are best for particular information needs?
- o How reliable and valid is database information? How sound are the conceptual schemes used to organize and sort the information? Little is known about the value these competing systems have for helping youth plan the course of their careers.

Recommended Practices

- o Teach students, educators, and rehabilitation professionals how to most efficiently access relevant occupational information available through computerized sources;
- o Encourage youth with disabilities to utilize their social networks and contacts with professionals to find out as much as they can about the world of work and/or expectations of individual employers.

F. Job-Seeking Skills Preparation

Job-seeking skills (JSS) instruction has become a standard feature of employment assistance programs. Numerous studies of the last decade provided evidence that JSS can have important effects on labor market achievements.[36] Employers have acknowledged that one of the most useful set of skills a

rehabilitation program can teach to persons with disabilities are JSS.[37] Finding jobs requires skills and knowledge that are fairly distinct from those involved in successful job performance.[38] Persons with a wide variety of disabling impairments have benefitted from JSS instruction including the retarded,[39] sheltered workshop clients,[40] the emotionally disturbed,[41] and youth in transition.[42]

The content of most JSS programs is quite consistent although instructional methods vary considerably. Self-instruction has been effective[43] as have group approaches.[44] The degree of professional support seems to vary between programs, but its relationship to effective JSS instruction has not been researched.

Most JSS instruction programs typically adopt a standardized package and offer this routinely to all program participants. Instruction is rarely individualized. Since many approaches seem effective, studies should focus on the issue of which approach works best with which kind of learner. Some might learn well enough on their own, others might require more professional support, and still others might benefit from group approaches. Combinations of these might be useful as well. Key to making decisions about approach might be cost/benefit data. Self-instructional approaches may be cost efficient for many students while more expensive approaches requiring professional attention and group involvement may be reserved for those who cannot manage learning on their own.

Another issue is to determine when it is best to offer JSS instruction. Should it be given when a job search is begun? Should it come much earlier in the transition process so that education and work experience reflects labor market information usually covered during JSS instruction? Providing answers to these questions will enable transition programs to individualize JSS instruction in a much more cost-efficient way.

Recommended Practices

o Continue to emphasize job-seeking skills in employment-assistance

programs for people with disabilities and in transition planning for youth with special needs;

- o Whenever possible, individualize the way job-seeking skills instructions is provided, based on the individual's own best way of learning.

G. Transition Planning

Over the last decade, legislation has mandated that federally-funded programs providing social services to persons with disabilities prepare individualized service plans. These plans are to indicate goals to be accomplished and services to be provided for each individual. Furthermore, these plans are to be developed in collaboration and with the consent of persons receiving the services. In special education programs, school personnel must prepare an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in collaboration with the parents of special education students. In vocational rehabilitation, the agency is required to develop an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). Since these are policy mandates and all service recipients must be covered by a plan, it is not certain what impact such planning has had since no comparison is possible with persons for whom such plans are not available.

There has been other evidence that formal individualized planning may be related to achievement of goals. Since the advent of planning, there have been extentions of the practice to subsets of services. In vocational rehabilitation, some programs have initiated Individualized Rehabilitation Placement Plans.[45] Zadny and James[46] reported that counselors who used placement plans placed a higher percentage of their clients into jobs. Similarly, in special education there are now programs that develop Individualized Transition Plans to help guide a young person through the final stages of formal schooling.[47]

Other programs that emphasize community linkages require that the IEP and IWRP be developed at the same time or at least integrated so that the resources

of schools and rehabilitation programs are systematically applied. Professionals representing both parties participate fully in the planning effort.[48] This emphasis on planning can be seen in how programs are organized, how staff roles and functions are allocated, and how services are provided.[49] Policies and practices that used to be uncoordinated are rapidly being displaced through carefully designed and executed program plans.

Given the array of interventions possible, systematic planning has a natural appeal. However, its effects are not clear. Is the process just an exercise to fulfill legal requirements? Does it make any difference to have a formalized agreement? Are the plans really developed in collaboration or is there merely rubber-stamping? Are plans being implemented and goals achieved? Is there a relationship between what is in the plans and eventual outcomes? Do plans remain rigid and fail to address changing circumstances or are they flexible and easily amended? Basically, there is little known about the practice of developing plans, the extent to which they are implemented and the impact they have on eventual outcomes.

Recommended Practices

- o Continue the planning and implementation of formal individualized plans in the areas of education, rehabilitation, placement ativities, and/or transition in general, according to an individual youth's particular needs;
- o Continue to coordinate the above plans and the resources needed to make them become reality.

H. Parental/Family Support Interventions

Support from parents and families to help youth with disabilities make a successful transition from school to adulthood has been found to be an invaluable key ingredient in many transition intervention strategies. Parents have information about their children that is often unavailable to professionals and

which could be useful to them in providing services. Many professionals, however, do not recognize the benefits of such knowledge and therefore do not provide the most appropriate services possible for an individual youth.[50]

Parents and families can provide support in many forms. They can work with consumer groups, and with education, training, and social service agencies to develop training programs for the general public, elected officials, and others responsible for supporting transition programs. They can also be on advisory committees with employers. Their experience in working with local schools can be invaluable to rehabilitation staff.[51] In order for parental interventions to be effective, many researchers stress that parents need to be prepared to address transition issues by the time their children are sixteen at the latest. Effective participation is believed to involve three areas:

- o learning about the transition process;
- o recognizing their role in the transition process; and
- o active participation[52]

On the whole, parental/family involvement in their children's educational programs is low due, it is believed, to lack of information, reluctance of some parents to be involved, lack of clarity of educational programs, parental frustration and simple lack of time.[53] Many arguments support the need for parental training that meets these needs[54] and would, presumably, increase their involvement.

An opposing view, however, argues that we need a revolution in thinking from a "parent involvement" paradigm to one of "family support." This argument poses that the family should be the central focus and service delivery systems the supports, not vice versa. Families are the ones needing help with transition problems, not the service delivery systems. "Parental involvement" assumes that parents should fit in with existing service arrangements and does not acknowledge the family and its needs. The "family support" approach suggests that there is a

current lack of parental involvement in transition activities because professionals are using the wrong perspective.[55] It also implies that the assumptions underlying parental involvement in the Education for all Handicapped Children Act are invalid for some parents.[56]

A specific intervention model called behavioral parent training (BPT) has been found to be effective in changing the behaviors of children with developmental disabilities. In this strategy, professionals train parents to apply basic behavior modification procedures that result in changes in their children's behavior. Self-help skills, language skills, or any desired new skills (e.g. work readiness skills) can be taught with this method.[57] Unfortunately, the long-term effects of such intervention are unclear, as is the generalizability of its effectiveness to groups other than youth with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

Another successful method to help parents cope with the problems of a child with a disability has been the parent support group. For example, the Georgia Parent to Parent Program helps parents experiencing crises by training other "supporting parents" to offer psychological support and information. The program began at one site in Georgia in 1981 and has grown steadily to multiple sites within the state.[58] A manual has also been adapted for national dissemination for parents who wish to set up programs in their own communities to help them to support their children as they go through adolescence or any other stage in life.

Successful family-based intervention strategies have not only involved parents. Siblings have also been tapped as resources to support their brothers or sisters with disabilities as they try to master new skills and behaviors. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of training siblings to teach desirable behaviors and social interaction patterns to children and adolescents with disabilities.[59]

- o Encourage parents and families of youth with disabilities to determine, for themselves, what their most appropriate role could be to support their children with disabilities as they mature into young adults; provide information and knowledge about options through the local community and nationally.

I. Community-Based Collaborative Intervention Models

The education and employment of youth with disabilities has been recognized as a responsibility of all of society. Schools are required to educate these youth in the least restrictive environment. State rehabilitation programs must use all available resources to support the rehabilitation of their clients. Employers must use affirmative action to employ people with disabilities. It makes sense to get all of these agents of society to work in concert so that a consistent application of resources is obtained. Recent cooperative program descriptions have emphasized the informal structure and contact among professionals that seems to be necessary to make formal agreements come alive.[60] Little is known, however, about the actual effects of systematic coordination. A recent Australian study surveyed families of children with severe disabilities. These families reported poor coordination between professionals of different disciplines and that these professionals also showed little concern for the problems faced by the families. Similarly, agency coordination, was poor and important information was often not available.[61] Studies of American families with handicapped children indicate that early educational experiences are fairly well coordinated for family needs but that stress and anxiety become increased as post-secondary considerations arise. Professional community support services are not well known and services appear uneven.[62] Studies need to document how interagency coordination can be achieved so that community resources can combine with parental resources to meet the employment and living needs of youth in transition.

The 1980's are seeing the first generation of persons with severe disabilities who were educated and served in public schools making the transition to adult life. As a result, the adult population requiring ongoing services is rapidly expanding and in need of types of community support not previously available. For instance, the Association for Retarded Citizens estimates that, given appropriate training and support, 75% of young adults with mental retardation could be completely self-supporting as adults, and another 10-15% partially self-supporting,[63] if they had the appropriate community support. Several new community-based programs to accomplish this have been designed and demonstrated. These will be briefly reviewed.

Supported Employment. One concept hailed by many researchers and practitioners as a viable approach to meet this need is supported employment.[64] The 1986 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 define supported employment as competitive work in integrated settings for individuals with severe handicaps who require ongoing support at the job site to maintain employment.[65] Supported employment differs from traditional vocational rehabilitation services in that it reduces reliance on pre-placement activities and emphasizes ongoing support and training for an unspecified time period while the person is employed. As a concept, it is an expression of recent federal policies that emphasize the rights of people with severe disabilities to integrated social and work experiences and to offer such experiences commensurate with their abilities.[66]

Supported employment is a type of employment which can be gained through at least four models: 1) individual placement - where individuals are placed in regular jobs and support is provided by a job coach as needed; 2) enclave model - where a small group of individuals are trained and supervised together in a regular work environment. This arrangement offers continuous supervision and guaranteed productivity by a community agency; 3) mobile crew - where a small, not-for-profit corporation is established which travels to different worksites

for particular jobs; and 4) benchwork model (or Affirmative Industry) - where a small, not-for-profit business which exclusively employs workers with severe disabilities is located in the community near places offering social integration possibilities (e.g. stores, restaurants) during breaks and lunch hours. It could also take the form of being a segregated worksite within a plant which allows a wider latitude of social behaviors than the other models. This last approach is typically used for individuals with the most severe disabilities and shares many features of traditional sheltered workshops.[67]

Many programs around the country have followed the supported employment training program developed in Oregon for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.[68] This program has found that successful training for young adults with mental retardation involves enhancing real-world coping skills through meticulous behavioral analysis and modification. Projects conducted at the University of Vermont have been able to retain 70% of individuals with mental retardation on competitive jobs over a 5 year period. The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University has been able to place many individuals with mental retardation who were considered unemployable, and they have stayed on the job longer than others without disabilities.

Supported employment has not been applied to any large extent with individuals who have physical disabilities so it is unclear how this type of intervention might help this group of young adults to become independent and integrated into society. A special program in Pittsburgh, however, has utilized the supported employment concept successfully to re-integrate young adults with head injuries into school or employment. The program offers continued treatment throughout the placement process and provides for job-specific training at a job site. Program staff have found that successful placement involves a long term, treatment-oriented continuum of services that emphasize overlap, repetition, and

consistency. Creativity on the part of staff, especially the job coaches, to address cognitive and emotional issues as well as vocational goals, is considered essential. Employer education about head injuries in general, and about the needs of a particular head-injured worker, is also vital to the successful employment of this population.[69]

Projects With Industry. In the late 1960's, the federal government conceived of an initiative called Projects With Industry (PWI) through the 1968 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act to encourage business to directly train and employ people with disabilities. PWI's are funded as individual projects to local business/rehabilitation partnerships composed of three essential elements: 1) a linkage to the private sector; 2) a training site; and 3) a source of individuals with disabilities. Linkage to the private sector occurs through a Business Advisory Council (BAC) where business representatives act as consultants to guide the project. The training site is usually a rehabilitation facility which provides the necessary training and support services for individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment. The state vocational rehabilitation agency is the source for individuals with severe disabilities. This partnership arrangement has led, over the years, to successful job placements for thousands of individuals with disabilities and significant retention rates once on the job.[70]

One strength of the PWI program is the organizational flexibility of the individual projects. Some operate as independent counseling and placement services and others are housed in rehabilitation medical facilities. Most are associated with rehabilitation facilities which provide a wider range of services. PWI's, therefore, have varying degrees of resources. They all share one philosophy, however. They make the needs of employers a priority that is equal to those of individuals with disabilities. Employers are considered clients of the program and, therefore, services are developed for them as well as for

individuals. As a result, PWI's have become a resource to employers in many ways, and by doing this, they keep employers actively interested while fulfilling their mission to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities.[71]

Some of the approximately 200 PWI's in operation currently assist students with disabilities to make their transition from school to work. Examples include PWI projects affilitated with the Electronics Industry Foundation, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and the University of Washington which have either developed specific programs for youth with disabilities or established coordinated efforts with schools, colleges, and adult education programs to use the local PWI as a transition channel towards job placement. There is the belief, however, that more involvement with this age group could be generated as a natural outgrowth of PWI activities.[72]

PWI's have and can provide several services to transition programs, whether already established or in the development phase. They can: 1) inform students of services available to help them find jobs, and assist with job-seeking skills and resume preparation; 2) provide labor market information to schools and students; 3) conduct workshops for parents to help them understand how to access PWI services; 4) assist community agencies in employer contacts to secure interest and participation in supported employment; 5) assist local transition coordinating units to set goals and priorities by serving on advisory panels; and 6) help in the establishment of formalized relationships with schools, community colleges, adult education programs and adult service providers.[73]

PWI's already have well-established, ongoing relationships with employers of all sizes ranging from national corporations to small businesses of two to three employees.[74] Any transition program looking to successfully place students with disabilities into full-time competitive jobs needs to meet employers' needs and to have the commitment of employers. PWI's can provide both.

School/Rehabilitation Collaboration. State education agencies and local school

systems have found that they cannot, independently, meet the transition needs of youth with disabilities. As a result, education officials have entered into formal cooperative programs with other state and local social service agencies and providers.[75] Nearly 40 states have cooperative agreements among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation programs, some being more active than others.[76]

There appears to be a range of models of successful collaboration between schools and rehabilitation agencies to improve occupational preparation and transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. Research on exemplary school/VR cooperative program practices has found several types of strategies to be effective:

- Placing a vocational rehabilitation representative in the schools to provide direct services to students such as evaluation, counseling, adjustment training and skills training;[77]
- Developing work experience programs using school personnel to provide on-site supervisors;
- Using VR services to provide more indepth vocational assessments while students are in school;
- Paying for work experience through VR stipends and employer wages;
- Active involvement of community advisory committees;
- Consultation to vocational education personnel regarding curriculum modification as needed, including consultation for work experience site modification; and
- Use of the summer break for developing extensive work experience, using school personnel as job coaches.[78]

Other research of exemplary programs has found that:

- schools have taken the lead in obtaining community support for cooperative arrangements;

- o there is usually a dynamic leader present who advocates for the development of social as well as vocational competence in the work environment;
- o local community business involvement leads to increased community involvement by other sectors; and
- o youth with severe and physical disabilities typically are underserved in many of these programs.[79]

It is believed that, for over two decades, cooperative work study programs between public schools and state Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVRs) have generally been effective in bridging the gap between school and a vocation for youth with mental retardation.[80] Problems, however, have surfaced. Although rigorous studies of these cooperative arrangements are not available, a survey of professionals engaged in such programs indicated there was some duplication of effort and feelings that not everyone contributed what they could have to make the effort successful.[81] Another study pointed out that even within the schools it was not clear who should assume the coordinating role for cooperative programs designed for special needs students.[82]

Furthermore, these programs have been de-emphasized until recently as a result of confusion stemming from mandates of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act and how they are interpreted in relation to requirements of the 1973 Rehabilitaiton Act. Specifically, the Rehabilitation Act required rehabilitation agencies to use existing programs that offer similar benefits prior to allocating their own dollars to provide rehabilitation services. Yet, the 1975 Education Act mandated schools to provide free and appropriate services to students with disabilities. It has been unclear if the involvement of rehabilitation agencies in these work study programs is actually a violation of the Rehabilitation Act due to duplication of services. As a result, many states have experienced decreases in the numbers of students served and in the range of

services provided.[83]

The 1987 Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act clarify that other federally supported agencies should use their resources to help accomplish free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities. Even with the previous confusion, it has been pointed out there were still services that vocational rehabilitation could provide to enhance these cooperative experiences. State and local formal agreements can be established along with careful monitoring of services. Assigning liaisons from schools and vocational rehabilitation to work together is one strategy for facilitating these partnerships.[84]

Some examples of school/rehabilitation collaboration include:

- At the National Center for Research in Vocational Education in Ohio, a local level model of teams of school and community persons has been successfully field-tested to provide support to secondary and post-secondary vocational students with disabilities. Formed on the basis of student needs and preferences, these teams consist of regular and special educators, administrators, rehabilitation professionals, parents, employers, friends, peers, union representatives, and community service agency representatives. These teams are patterned after Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and assist students in identifying, evaluating, and realizing educational and employment goals on an individual basis. Inservice practicum experiences bring team members together. The model also includes a state advisory and local steering committee. Printed resource materials have been developed to encourage replication of the model.[85]
- In Michigan, the state vocational rehabilitation program and local school districts have cooperated in an effort called Project SEEK (Self Enhancement Employment Key). Project SEEK focuses on the importance

of how people with disabiliities present themselves to others socially and while on a job interview, and stems from the fact that many young adults with disabilities lack interpersonal skills and in many cases basic hygiene skills. Project SEEK, with the help of local resources, such as beauty salons, counseling agencies, and local clothing stores, provides these services as needed. Its activities encourage self-help and successful transition through improvements in basic hygiene, clothing, grooming, interpersonal skills, interviewing skills and appearance in general.[86]

- New York State has actively experimented in early intervention for students in transition through a "Cooperative Service Model" based in local school districts. Cooperation is between the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Occupational and Continuing Education (OOCE) and the Office for Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions (OECHC) within the State Education Department. Services, provided by a team of rehabilitation counselors, special educators and occupational educators, revolve around a model based on five components: eligibility determination, IEP planning, vocational education assessment, a comprehensive instructional program, and consistent placement/follow-up services.[87]

Recommended Practices

- Provide the means for and/or build upon informal structures and contact among professionals, families and youth themselves to help make community-based cooperative programs work;
- Continue to offer and provide, as needed, follow-up support and services to youth who are new to the competitive world of work;
- Provide follow-up support, once on the job, to youth with all types of disabilities;

- o Continue to educate employers about the needs of youth with particular disabilities, keeping in mind at all times the needs of the employers, themselves;
- o Allow for organizational flexibility in the planning and operation of community-based training and employment programs;
- o Expand employer/rehabilitation partnerships to include schools and colleges to make it possible for young adults with disabilities to benefit from these established relationships and to provide employers with a source of qualified, entry-level workers;
- o Expand school/rehabilitation partnerships to include employers to make it possible for young adults with disabilities to have direct access to competitive jobs and to provide employers with a source of qualified, entry-level workers.

Summary. Many, if not all, transition programs use a variety of combinations of interventions to help youth with disabilities achieve as much independence as possible. A substantial body of literature is available to guide the development of policy and practice. The current attention to the transition years of these youth provides an opportunity to capitalize on this rich resource of knowledge and experience. The focus on community-based services and supported employment and living is a logical extension of the mainstreaming efforts of a decade ago. The level of energy and commitment evident in today's transition programs at all levels promises a rich return for these youth and their families, the professionals serving them, and society as a whole.

This level of support is needed now and for the foreseeable future if the needs of youth with disabilities, as documented in Section I, will be met. Although there has been progress over the last decade as measured by legislative and funding support, our government, educational, and employment structures need to create policies that open more opportunities to these youth than currently

exist. Also, although many innovative program practices have been demonstrated recently, a greater emphasis on research is needed to empower the creative process that will build new programmatic directions to meet future needs. Section II has highlighted these policy and research recommendations.

Although we have focused extensively on the situation facing youth with disabilities, we must remember that they share much in common with their peers who do not have disabilities. Section III has pointed out both similarities and differences among these youth and suggested how program services can be similar for all youth and where special services may still be needed. Section IV presented research findings about a variety of interventions that have shown promise as suitable service delivery strategies and techniques for youth with disabilities. These interventions can serve as a base for designing comprehensive programs for mainstreaming youth with disabilities so that, as adults, they will have the same opportunities as everyone to assume all the roles our society makes available to whatever degree they choose and are able to fulfill.

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Biographical Sketches

David Vandergoot has been involved in rehabilitation since 1970. The majority of his experience is in the area of promoting employment for people with disabilities. He graduated from Michigan State University 1975 with a degree in counseling and taught in the rehabilitation core area of the Counseling Department at the University of Maryland from 1975-1977. Since then, he has been associated with the Research and Training Institute at Human Resources Center, currently serving as the Vice President for Research and Training.

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A COMMENTARY

on David Vangergoot, Amy Gottlieb and Edwin Martin's

THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

by Sharon Stewart Johnson

This paper examines existing practices and offers new directions for equalizing the opportunities available for youth with disabilities. Examination of these issues is timely. With the best of intentions, we have allowed an entire generation of youth with disabilities to receive the benefits of Public Law 94-142 and resultingly become victims of 94-142. Youth with disabilities are primed and ready - with no place to go. Vandergoot, Gottlieb and Martin provide a thoughtful overview of issues that prevent youth with disabilities from fully entering society and the work force. Their identification of the existing issues is accurate and well-stated. The magnitude of the problem becomes inescapable as the authors review research and public policy noting again and again the lack of public agency coordination and school/family collaboration that results in the unemployment of two out of every three persons with a disability.

The authors begin their examination with an attempt to improve the reader's understanding of disability terminology. They do a credible job of differentiating disability and handicap, but do so without reference to the definitions for these words in statuate. If there is any possibility of our coming to use terms and definitions more precisely, it would seem most practical to draw from the language present in the law, primarily Public Law 99-506, the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1986.

The simple and repeated reference to "youth with disabilities" throughout this paper rather than "the disabled" models the authors' desire to portray disability in a positive context. But the attempt to "clearly define the concepts" and avoid "misperception" have not succeeded. The definitions of

"disability" and "impairment" are confused and confusing and the definition of "functional limitations" is too brief. The authors' intention is consistent with current thinking, but the definitions used and the approach suggested do not generate easy acceptance or promote improved understanding by the professional or lay public. The effort is valiant -- but there is a need for a new starting point in the law.

Chapter 2 - Recommendations

Vandergoot, Gottlieb and Martin leap into the recommendations in Chapter 2 with brief reference to Chapter 3's review of the literature. I fail to understand this sequence. Despite lack of a good sequence, the authors array research and policy recommendations thoroughly and clearly. There are no arguments with any suggestions for further study. Absent are recommendations to examine the disparity between studies of the effects of work-study programs. Later questions are raised about whether such programs assist or do not assist students in entering the community and performing real work with employers as a part of their transition from school to work. Despite these later questions, no recommendation exists for further confirming studies in this area. There is also no significant reference to the work that needs to be done in the development of an individual Transition Plan and this plan's potential relationship to the IEP (Individual Education Plan) and the IWRP (the Individual Work Rehabilitation Plan). This lack of recommendation is better understood after reading the authors' position on transition planning in their final chapter and their lack of belief in the practicalness and usefulness of the Transition Plan approach.

The recommendation that suggests using parents, teachers, and peers of youth with disabilities as models in maximizing social and community living skills is an approach that is seeing some field trial with youth who have head injury. The Washington State Head Injury Foundation, in collaboration with the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, has developed a "family

as service provider" concept wherein family and extended family and friends of youth with head injuries are being trained in case management techniques. More examination of the effectiveness of this model is imperative.

The recommendation for further study of Supported Employment and its impact with various disability groupings is being done with adults in a number of states. At least four states - Michigan, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Utah - are exploring Supported Employment with physically disabled persons. More important, however, than Supported Employment's use with varying disability populations might be studies that target Supported Employment's use in school to work transition and the use of a job coach in the acquisition of individualized labor market information. We do not assume that youth without disabilities will graduate into a job that will "hold" for life and cannot therefore assume youths with disabilities will do so. Within the rehab plan, post employment must be encouraged and monitored using job coach approaches. More examination of whether this might work and how it might work is very much in order.

Policy recommendations in this paper are well-stated, but not very controversial. In order to effect real change, we will need to take risks. For example, in tandem with the schools' core responsibilities in transition, the families might take on management oversight of the youth with disabilities move from school to work. With the entry of computerization, students and their families can be in greater control of access to and receipt of labor market information. They might do computerized vocational assessments and initiate their own job trials. Consumers and their families, through increased technological awareness, can become their own "gatekeepers." This paper could focus more on the family as the basic case management unit adding different professional members to the team as the child becomes a youth and then an adult. Families could be supported and trained to become pro-active case-managers working with the school, with adult agencies, with the community, and with

employers. The paper hints at these possibilities, but does not explore them in substantial depth.

Chapter 3 - Research Highlights

A review of the research in this area is both frustrating and enlightening. The suggestion that "what one knows and who one knows" is most important was a practical assessment true for disabled and non-disabled youth. No mention was given to research in disability awareness and disability awareness training programs, such as "Tilting at Windmills" by Rich Pimentel. Such programs would appear to have great potential impact in school environments and could act as a leveling agent in assuring disabled youth were accessing the same people and information as non-disabled youth.

Chapter 4 - Intervention Strategies

The authors' examination of intervention strategies believed to have a positive impact on successful outcome for youths with disabilities is the core chapter in this paper. It is targeted, practical - the kind of information the practitioner can lift out and immediately put to use.

Work Experience Programs

Emphasis on a cooperative work program where special education students work at community jobs for school credit is significant in its highlighting the importance of strong involvement by employers during all phases of the program. Use of business advisory groups linked to school boards is one example of such a functional approach. In many states, vocational rehabilitation's experience in concert with public schools during the 60s and 70s, while not well researched as to results, was widely perceived to be an avenue by which thousands of youth entered the world of work through extending classroom into the community. If a similar program was resurrected and restructured with a Supported Employment component and an emphasis placed on youth with severe disabilities, measurable change in transition outcome might be expected.

Presentation of a modified version of the traditional sheltered workshop or rehabilitation facility as a work experience option for youth with disabilities deserves further consideration. In situations which necessitate innovative options for youth with psychiatric disabilities, creative use of the protected work setting must be further explored. Rehabilitation facilities (a better term for community-based programs which may include a sheltered component) are rapidly tooling up for the future and in many states are leading developers of work evaluations and on-the-job training in the community. Vandergoot, Gottlieb and Martin's reference to part-time/full-time options could be further updated by reviewing an article in a recent issue of Exceptional Children entitled "Financial Implications of Half and Full-Time Employment for Persons with Disabilities."

Work Skills Preparation

This discussion and the distinction between work and skill preparation and work experience is useful. An additional consideration might include reference to struggling vocational education programs. The merging of special education and vocational education could provide an opportunity for more students receiving special education funding to access the vocational education system.

There is irony in that the current thrust for "excellence in education" tends to boil down to increased emphasis in the very areas that students with learning disabilities and developmental delays have a difficult time mastering, i.e., "pure academics." Excellence in education for these young people could well be defined as high quality, thorough vocational education in work-related behaviors and specific skill building toward a targeted vocation.

Employer Focused Initiatives

This discussion is well-founded, but could be strengthened by reference to the development of employer accounts and the use of marketing initiatives which are a major focus of many rehabilitation programs nationwide. The rehabilitation

system is beginning to successfully apply newly-learned marketing concepts to the needs of young people with disabilities who are exiting the school system.

A greater emphasis on business relations specialists in tandem with vocational rehabilitation counselors is a potentially valuable approach. The use of specialization, more collaboration between VR agencies and employment sector programs, and the use of technology in connecting with employers deserves further exploration. The introduction of state-funded reasonable accommodation revolving funds that allow employers to make accommodations that are partially reimburseable is an imperative inclusion in such an approach.

Rehabilitation Engineering Applications

As the authors suggest, rehabilitation knows little of the application of rehabilitation engineering to the transition process. The rehabilitation community as a whole has just begun to effectively apply rehabilitation engineering innovation to its regular caseloads; its application to school-age clients will necessarily follow. The receptivity of the school-age client to rehabilitation engineering approaches can be expected to be good as this is a natural time for identifying opportunities and establishing patterns that can make one or more efficient and effective worker throughout life.

Occupational Information

The authors frequently restated conclusions that "both quality and quantity of information help youth make appropriate decision during their transition years and that information is an important element in labor market success" is revealing.

The authors note that the provision of occupational information/exploration is an under-developed area in transition programming. It suggests that the rehabilitation system could be most useful to the school-age client by collaborating intensively with public schools so that the schools could become experts in accessing labor market information and using it in the context of

both vocational education and special education. Computerized exchange of this information should become integral to vocational planning for disabled and non-disabled youth. A workable computerized vocational assessment, occupational exploration that is seeing early and successful use in Washington, Minnesota, and Alaska is the OASYS (Occupational Access System) developed by Vertek, Inc. It is unique in its accuracy and comprehensiveness and offers a potential for further tailoring for use with youth who are disabled.

Job Seeking Skills

As suggested by the authors, many schools are attempting to provide job seeking skills instruction with limited success and little individualization. Vocational rehabilitation is usually disappointed in the students referred for services in terms of their job-seeking skills savvy. A re-accented emphasis on a coordinated school-rehabilitation JSS program that has a self-directed job search flavor, is experiential curriculum, and is also tailored to adolescent interests is in order.

Transition Planning

In many states, transition planning is in a state of great confusion since there is no "designated hitter" who is responsible for shepherding the process from start to finish. The authors offer little insight in this area, but raise well-stated questions about the natural appeal of systematic planning and its untested impact. A technique known as responsibility charting, originally outlined in an article by Joseph McCann and Thomas Gilmore, describes a process wherein various actors can specify tasks and pinpoint their level of authority, responsibility, and consultive involvement. Using a technique such as responsibility charting, a state can develop a common plan of action based upon one or more of the various models now evolving. The plan should be encouraged but not mandated and should grow incrementally as the essential agencies demonstrate a willingness to join forces and share resources to accomplish

transition. In an era of diminishing resources, leveraging one another's dollars is politically practical and programmatically necessary.

Parent-Family Support Intervention

The authors are correct -- parents are, in fact, those with the largest natural investment in students with disabilities, those who would be most likely to initiate and follow through on transition planning given technical assistance and information about the system that allows them to operate within it. Parents are the most powerful change agents and have the greatest potential to effect the transition process. The authors touch on some, but not all, of the practical considerations in this recommendation. Both parents work outside the home in over half of the American families and do not have time and personal resources necessary for transition planning. More accent could be placed on the extended families, siblings, family neighbors, and disabled and non-disabled peers of the youth in transition. Both school and adult agency personnel need to be trained and encouraged to work with families as allies. Strategies that encompass both the use of responsibility charting and parents as allies training for rehab professionals are in order.

Community Based Interventions

Supported Employment

The explanation of Supported Employment offered by Vandergoot, Gottlieb and Martin is succinct and accurate. They acknowledge that Supported Employment does work. Various studies, specifically those by Bellamy, Wehman and Vogleberg have clearly demonstrated this fact. The authors fail to acknowledge how much work needs to be done to apply the Supported Employment concept to school to work transition for disabled youth. There is an in-built confusion in transition as it is defined in the Rehab Act and typically applied to the movement of persons who are psychiatrically disabled into the work force.

In discussing Supported Employment with physically disabled and

traumatically brain injured persons, the authors acknowledge Supported Employment's requirement that long-term supports should be in place to assure employment over time. A follow-along system for TBI and physically handicapped persons does not exist in most states. To encourage Supported Employment without assurance of support dollars over time is irresponsible.

PWIs

The discussion of PWIs is excellent -- the reference to organizational flexibility as a key strength is well-stated and may serve as impetus for the reader is considering PWIs' greater role as in the rehabilitation system over time.

Summary

This paper has done a commendable job of spelling out areas which need to be covered if transition is to be accomplished in any definitive sense. The stakes are enormous, the barriers are high, but the prospects are excellent. Now is the time to build on good foundations using available technology. We must take greater risks and re-involve families as our primary partners in the transition process.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sharon Stewart Johnson is the Director, Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Formerly a project director with the McKnight Foundation, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Science in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from Mankato State University.

A COMMENTARY

on **David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin Martin's**

THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

by **Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin**

I. Introduction

The authors of "The Transition of Youth with Disabilities" assembled and analyzed an extensive array of research material about the issues affecting the transition of youth with disabilities from school to work and community life. Both the authors' professional experience in the field of employment for persons with disabilities and their review of literature on the subject generated some important suggestions for future research, policy, and program development.

The purpose of this commentary is to make recommendations to supplement those already presented in the report. Specifically, 1) we make recommendations which will expand or strengthen several of the suggested areas for future research and policy development; and 2) we analyze additional issues faced by disabled youth in transition from the perspective of adults with disabilities and parents of disabled children. This perspective emphasizes the role of law and policy reform, advocacy, and the disability rights/independent living movement in future strategies for transition and integration of youth with disabilities into the mainstream. Although some additional research is cited as the basis for these suggestions and recommendations, we also rely on extensive professional and personal experience working directly with children and adults with disabilities who encounter barriers to full integration.

II. General Recommendations

We think the following general recommendations, which were omitted entirely from the report, are important to a thorough analysis of the issues and urge that they be included:

1) Include disabled adults as role models for youth with disabilities. There is

a marked absence in the report of the important role adults with disabilities can play as role models for children and youth with disabilities and parents of disabled children. Although little research has been conducted to substantiate the belief that disabled adult role models can play an important part in appropriate socialization of disabled youth, an abundance of research demonstrates the value of adult role models to minority youth and young women. The experiences of other disenfranchised groups are sufficiently parallel to those of disabled youth to suggest further research.

2) Include a description of key federal laws which bar discrimination against disabled people and establish their right to habilitation and community services in addition to P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, specifically, Title V and VII of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1978, the Developmental Disabilities Services and Assistance Act, and the 1968 Architectural Barriers Act. The implementation and enforcement of these laws are critical to the success of policy and program initiatives that facilitate the transition of youth with disabilities to employment and community life.

3) Realistically assess the success of P.L 94-142 in achieving public school education in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for disabled children. Consider research initiatives that examine disincentives to state and local implementation of P.L. 94-142's "LRE" mandate, which may undermine the goal of school and community integration for youth with disabilities.

4) Include an analysis of the role that the disability rights/independent living movement and, specifically, Independent Living Centers play in furthering transitional opportunities for youth with disabilities. Additional research and policy initiatives should link the Centers with other community and employer-based projects to strengthen the network of services and support available to youth in transition.

5) Include a discussion of the role advocacy and law reform play in furthering

the goal of successful transition and integration for disabled youth. Consider policy initiatives which monitor enforcement of laws barring discrimination on the basis of disability to learn what role lack of enforcement plays in foreclosing opportunities for youth.

III. Recommendations Pertaining to Specific Sections of the Report

Overview of Disabilities - A Statistical Picture

Female and minority persons with disabilities, including youth, face specific and unique social and economic problems because of their race and sex. It would be helpful to describe statistically the influence race and sex have on the overall likelihood of attaining a productive place in the economic mainstream. For example, according to a report published in 1982 by Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund:

> Racial/ethnic minorities are heavily over represented in the disabled population, relative to their numbers in the U.S. population as a whole. In one study, the Census Bureau found that while about 15% of the total working-age population (16-64) of the United States was work-disabled (limited in kind or amount of work they could perform because of physical or mental condition), 22% of the Black population and 20.6% of the Hispanic population fell into this category.* A large survey ** conducted by the University of California for the state's Department of Rehabilitation found that while 10.5% of all working-age Californians were substantially disabled, more than 19% of the American Indians, 17% of the black residents, and 11.1% of the Hispanic population were so disabled.[1]

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* Although seriously under-counted, Black persons in the 1980 Census were found to comprise 11.7% of the U.S. population, and Spanish-origin persons, 6.5%. (Source: Statistical Abstract, supra note 4 at 25, Table Nos. 26, 28).

** University of California, Executive Summary for the California Disability Survey - Prepared for the California Department of Rehabilitation (J. Shanks and H. Freeman, Dirs., 1980), Table ES-7).

Also, according to a 1984 Congressional Research Survey Report, there is a significant disparity between the number of black students in the general school population and the number of black students who receive special education services relative to the population as a whole. Specifically, the report states:

> Black students representing 16 percent of total public school enrollment, accounted for 39 percent of the educable mentally retarded, 28 percent of the trainable mentally retarded, and 25 percent of the seriously emotionally disturbed.[2]

Further, according to "Disabled Women in America, A Statistical Report Drawn From Census Bureau Data" prepared by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped:

> One working-age woman in every twelve is disabled. Of 74,672,000 women aged 16-64 and not in institutions, 6,319,000 or 8.5% were disabled according to the March 1981 Current Population Survey.
>
> While women represent a majority (51%) of all persons in the working-age population, this is not true of working-age disabled women. There, women remain a minority, representing 48.3% of all disabled individuals aged 16-64 and not in institutions.
>
> The average disabled woman in 51 years of age. She has a high school level of education. She does not work, nor is she actively seeking work. Her income from all sources was less than $3,500 in 1980. Some disabled women, however, have met with striking success in the labor market.
>
> By contrast, the typical nondisabled woman is 33 years old. She is a high-school graduate. She works. And she had an income in 1980 of more than $7,000.
>
> The 1970's were notable for a massive movement of working-age women into the labor force. Most disabled women did not participate in this historic movement, although some have registered important personal achievements in the decade just past.[3]

This data suggest that both racism and sexism seriously influence the opportunities afforded disabled racial minorities and women. Thus, poverty, unemployment, underemployment and social isolation, and stigmas are more prevalent among racial minority and female youth and adults with disabilities than among white disabled youth and adults.

Research and policy initiatives should be developed in collaboration with groups and organizations working for equal opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities and women.

Research Recommendation

The report accurately recommends that research be directed toward determining the relative impact of factors such as unjust and prejudicial discrimination, disincentives inherent in current public policies and restricted experiences, and social contacts of youth with disabilities. In addition to comparing the relative impact of these factors, consideration should be given to investigating the extent to which lack of enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and policies causes the absence of an equal opportunity for participation.

For example, vocational work experience opportunities are presently being developed for developmentally disabled youth on junior college campuses in school districts in Northern California and throughout the country. However, the continuing presence of architectural barriers and the lack of wheelchair accessible public transit bars some students from participating in these opportunities.

Both federal and state law call for architectural access to college campuses, and California state law calls for wheelchair access to all new buses ordered by transit systems. Yet, lack of vigorous enforcement of these laws results in persistent physical barriers and continued exclusion of persons with disabilities in a wide variety of educational and employment training programs.

In order to evaluate accurately the spectrum of factors which restrict experience and social contacts of disabled youth, some consideration must be given to the effect of intransigent architectural and policy barriers on opportunities for integration.

On several occasions throughout the report, reference is made to the effect of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, on increasing the number of children of disabilities who are receiving a "free appropriate public education." The introduction to the report states:

> Since 1978, when the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) became fully effective, each child with a disability has been entitled to a "free and appropriate public education" based on an individual education plan developed by school authorities with suggestions

and approval from the child's parents. With millions of children now proceeding through and exiting from the public school systems, a national focus has developed on what prospects these young adults will be when the school years are over. How can they be absorbed into our society at large? How will they be able to participate in the work force? What kinds of support do, and will, they need? The recommendations discussed in this paper will help answer some of these questions.[4]

Although undeniably millions of children with disabilities receive an education who would have been unserved or underserved prior to the enactment of P.L. 94-142, it is widely accepted by progressive educational professionals that school and community integration at the earliest possible opportunity promotes understanding, reduces stereotyping, and fosters independence and self-esteem. Yet, many school districts throughout the United States have resisted developing programs which offer opportunities for interaction between disabled students and their non-disabled peers. In most communities, "handicapped-only" segregated schools remain. According to the report being commented upon here as well as other data, including the 1984 Congressional Research Service's Digest of Data on Persons with Disabilities, over 300,000 disabled children remain in segregated schools or other institutions. Further, many children continue to be misclassified, underserved, or inappropriately served in other special education programs.

A startling report about the level of educational integration of disabled students in Massachusetts entitled "Out of the Mainstream," published by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, poignantly describes that state's retreat from the integration mandate of both state federal law. Among many disturbing findings, the report states: "Analysis of special education placement practices over the past eleven years reveals several trends which indicate that schools statewide have moved backwards, away from integration." "Statistics indicate that both the number of students and the placement rate for segregated day programs increased steadily statewide from 1974 to 1985." "Over one-third more disabled students were placed in segregated classrooms during this time period." "Despite the mandate to reduce segregation, the practice of placing students in totally separate schools continued at

the same rate [between 1979 and 1985]." "Placement of students with disabilities in the more integrated . . . programs dropped dramatically from 1979 to 1984.[5]

In a foreward to this report, Edward M. Kennedy, Jr. states:

> The importance of the findings and the conclusions of this report go far beyond the public school system and the administrative structures that have been set up to serve disabled students in the past decade. The failure to provide integrated educational opportunities has harmful ramifications throughout society.[6]

The problems of realizing the promise of educational integration are not limited to Massachusetts. In 1985, the United States Department of Education conducted an investigation of special education programs throughout California. In addition to visiting segregated facilities, the team of investigators conducted hearings in which parents of disabled children throughout the state had an opportunity to express their concerns about the special education programs their children were attending. In 1986, the Department of Education issued a report to the State Superintendent of Public Education, charging numerous violations of P.L. 94-142, including California's failure to comply with the LRE provisions of the law.

In the face of this evidence, we suggest a research initiative for collection of information about the problems associated with implementation of the LRE mandate. If schools and community members are afforded an opportunity to articulate their concerns about integration, model collaborative projects can be launched among educators, policy-makers, parents, and adults with disabilities to form strategies for change.

As a practical matter, it makes sense to start integrating disabled people in school to the maximum extent possible. Any intervention strategies for transition will be strengthened if the disabled youth's earliest educational experiences are in integrated settings.

Policy Recommendations

The report makes a variety of policy recommendations specific to employment of youth with disabilities. We recommend elaborating on some of these

recommendations both to clarify and to elucidate the issues for uninitiated readers. Specifically, the section on "work disincentives" should explain exactly what the problems are (i.e., how much money an employee is allowed to earn before benefits such as Supplemental Security Income are lost; why medical coverage in crucial to independence and what exclusions to coverage are contained in most private health policies; the role of personal care services to independent living and how the state and federal funded services are threatened by substantial gainful employment.) It should be noted that several recent state and federal legislative initiatives address some of these problems. Recommendations for additional complementary reforms would be a more accurate portrayal of what is needed.

As in other sections of the paper, the policy recommendations suggested to address the need for accessible public transit, affordable accessible housing, and reasonable accommodations in the workplace should be made in the context of existing federal and state laws barring discrimination against people with disabilities. The role of law and policy reform in achieving these goals is not adequately addressed in the paper overall and is most noticeably absent in this section. Architectural barrier removal and reasonable accommodation are legally required of many employers and in many community contexts. Compliance with these legal requirements is not voluntary. However, policy initiatives, in conjunction with more traditional enforcement remedies, which urge compliance because of social and/or economic incentives are certainly appropriate.

Finally, we strongly suggest that policy recommendations that pertain to employment include an expanded section on the need for community-based experiences which build social skills in preparation for and in addition to employment for youth with disabilities. Examples include taking enrichment courses at junior colleges, volunteering, and participating in church, community, or recreational programs and activities. Although there is some disagreement between the educational professionals about whether some form of employment is the only

accepted goal for youths with disabilities, we think some other kinds of community participation are appropriate for some people.

Family Related Issues

The Executive Summary highlights the family related issues discussed in the paper. However, the manner in which these issues are addressed, especially in Part II (Research and Policy Recommendations) and in Part IV (Intervention Strategies), does not go far enough in addressing these issues.

While the authors recognize the critical advocacy and support role parents can play in helping their children with disabilities develop the social skills and behaviors necessary for successful transition, the research recommendations are scanty. For example, the report suggests research to determine the factors which assist a family to "turn (what many consider to be) a liability (a child with a disability) into an asset for both the individual and the family." Viewing disability as an "asset" as a goal for families may be promoting a guilt-provoking cliche that many parents, even the most loving and involved parents, might view as unrealistic. The recommendation suggests looking at how families who do not experience having a disabled child as an asset can learn from those who do.

From our experience as parents of disabled children and based on our work with hundreds of families over the years, the recommendations should be expanded to examine the training, services, and service delivery models which best support the family's efforts to impart the values, skills, and self-concepts necessary for successful transition. For most families, having a disabled child creates psychological, social, and economic hardships beyond those normally experienced by other families. These hardships, in turn, interfere with the family's ability to be involved with education and social service systems and the ability to promote positive psychological and social attitudes and behaviors. For example, services such as adequate child care, respite, and attendant care relieve the family of various social and economic burdens and reduce the overwhelming number of roles

and frequency of roles parents of disabled children and youth must assume. Other services provided at public expense, such as health care, provision of necessary equipment such as wheelchairs, computers, and other adaptive devices, also relieve the hardships. While some services are provided to families through insurance or public programs, how bureaucracies deliver these services and the battles involved in obtaining them can either relieve or create stress. The adequacy of social and economic resources, in our experience, plays a major role in determining family attitudes, expectations, cohesiveness, and ability to plan for the future.

In order to raise the level of social and economic resources to families, major policy funding and legislative initiatives to create or strengthen existing services may need to be developed. In Part II, no specific policy recommendations address family issues. By omitting any such recommendations, it appears that both local and national level policies and programs that support the family are in place, which unfortunately is not the case.

Similarly, the intervention strategies relating to family issues need re-examination or expansion. The suggestions included, while they are important, may add new and additional roles for parents that may be unrealistic for most families. Parents can work with consumer groups, social service agencies, and employers to educate them about their children's disabilities and needs and to work toward the development of new programs. However, in light of the difficulties of obtaining parents participation in the educational arena, it is unlikely that, without proper social and economic support, such additional participation will occur. The intervention strategies could address this reality by looking at ways "family support" increases "parent involvement." We believe that the parent involvement model (P.L. 94-142 model) is not in conflict with the "family support" model discussed in the report. However, support may be necessary to increase involvement. Family support and social service systems are mutually dependent. But strategies designed to increase participation will have only limited success in the absence of family

centered support.

Finally, we also suggest another avenue for research on family issues: the role that disabled adults as role models and the adult independent living movement can play in raising parental expectations for disabled children and youth. Without these role models, parents may lack awareness generally about the degree of independence their children can attain and, specifically, about the range of vocational and adult social roles disabled people can assume.

Biographical sketches

Mary Lou Breslin

Ms. Breslin is presently Acting Director of the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), a national law and polity center dedicated to furthering the civil rights of people with disabilities. She has served as Deputy Director of the Fund since it was founded in 1979. Ms. Breslin is a disabled woman.

Ms. Breslin has been active in the national disability rights/independent living movement since the mid-1970's.

Diane Lipton

Ms. Lipton is a staff attorney at the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund. She is an expert in disability civil rights law and policy and specializes in furthering the rights of children with disabilities to integrated educational and vocational opportunities. She has been active in the disability rights/independent living movement for over a decade and is the parent of a severely disabled teenaged daughter.

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Publications of

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE

THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

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American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot (July 1987) *by James R. Wetzel*

Drawing on the latest, statistically reliable government surveys, this demographic review captures much of the diversity inherent in a collective portrait of American 15-24 year-olds. Includes data on marriage, childbearing, living arrangements, income, education, employment, health, and juvenile justice. Historical trends as well as future projections are presented along with *12 charts, 18 tables.*

Current Federal Policies and Programs for Youth (June 1987) *by J.R. Reingold and Associates*

Who is doing what for youth in the federal government? This concise survey of current federal policies and programs for youth in Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Justice and Defense provides a one-of-a-kind resource for researchers, practitioners, analysts and policymakers who want quick access to accurate information about federal youth policy. *Includes state-level allocation tables.*

Youth Policies and Practices in Eleven Countries (August 1987) *by Rosemary George*

Presents the salient features of the post-compulsory education and training policies of 11 foreign countries designed to smooth the transition of now-college bound youth into the workplace, The countries are: Australia, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Norway and Sweden. *Includes tables.*

Single copies of these three publications will be available for a limited time and without charge from: **William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Youth and America's Future,** Suite 301, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-5541

Multiple copies may be purchased at **$5.00 each** from either organization:

Institute for Educational Leadership
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The following **Working Papers** were prepared for the Commission's deliberations by a variety of scholars and practitioners. They are available at **$10.00 each postpaid** from the **Institute for Educational Leadership** (See previous page).

Youth Transition from Adolescence to the World of Work *by Garth Mangum.* **Commentaries** *by Marvin Lazerson and Stephen F. Hamilton.*

Youth and the Workplace: Second-chance Programs and the Hard-to-Serve *by Thomas J. Smith, Gary C. Walker, Rachel A. Baker, (Public/Private Ventures).* **Commentaries** *by Gary Burtless, Jacqueline Danzberger, Morton Sklar, Richard F. Elmore.*

Who Will Train and Educate Tomorrow's Workers? The Financing of Non-College-Bound Young Workers *by Robert Sheets, Andrew Hahn, Robert Lerman and Eric Butler.*

Youth and Work: What We Know; What We Don't Know; What We Need to Know *by Ivan Charner and Bryna Shore Fraser (National Institute for Work and Learning).* **Commentaries** *by Sue E. Berryman and Hayes Mizell.*

The Bridge: Cooperative Education *by Cynthia Parsons.* **Commentaries** *by Dennis Gray and David Lynn, Morgan V. Lewis, Roy L. Wooldridge.*

What Does the Independent Sector Do for 16-24 Year-Olds? *by Miriam M. Wood.* **Commentaries** *by Virginia Hodgkinson and Leonard Stern.*

The Interaction of Family, Community, and Work in the Socialization of Youth *by Stephen F. Hamilton.* **Commentaries** *by John Ogbu and Paul Reisman.*

The Difference that Differences Make: Adolescent Diversity and Its Deregulation *by Melvin D. Levine.* **Commentaries** *by Michael Wald and John H. Martin.*

Transitional Difficulties of Out-of Home Youth *by Joy Duva and Gordon Raley.* **Commentaries** *by Eileen Pasztor and James M. Walker.*

The Transition to Adulthood of Youth with Disabilities *by David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb and Edwin W. Martin.* **Commentaries** *by Sharon Stewart Johnson and Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin.*

Mutuality in Parent-Adolescent Relationships *by James Youniss.* **Commentaries** *by Ann C. Crouter and John H. Lewko.*

Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports *by Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein and Julia Littell with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken.* **Commentaries** *by Diane P. Hedin and Judith Erickson*

Determinants of Youth's Successful Entry into Adulthood *by Sarah Gideonse.* **Commentaries** *by Elijah Anderson and David F. Ricks.*